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THE CRY:

A NEW DRAMATIC FABLE.

VOL. II.

——*Hominem pagina nostra sapit.* Martial.

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PROLOGUE

TO

PART the THIRD.

"BY invention (ſays an ingenious author) I believe is generally underſtood, a creative faculty; which would indeed prove romance writers to have the higheſt pretenſions to it; whereas by invention is really meant no more (and ſo the word ſignifies) than diſcovery, or finding out; or to explain it at large, a quick and ſagacious penetration into the true eſſence of all the objects of our contemplation."

Invention then is in truth pretty much the ſame with having eyes and opening them

in order to diſcern the objects which are placed before us. But the eye here made uſe of muſt be the mind's eye (as *Shakeſpear*, with his peculiar aptneſs of expreſſion, calls it) and ſo ſtrictly juſt is this metaphor, that nothing is apparently more frequent than a perverſe ſhutting of this mental eye when we have not an inclination to perceive the things offered to our internal view. I know not likewiſe, why a ſhort-ſighted mind's eye ſhould not be as good an expreſſion as a ſhort-ſighted body's eye. But in this we are much kinder to our ſenſe than to our intellect; for in order to aſſiſt the former we uſe glaſſes and ſpectacles of all kinds adapted to our deficiency of ſight, whereas in the latter we are ſo far from accepting the aſſiſtance of mental glaſſes or ſpectacles, that we often ſtrain our mind's eye, even to blindneſs, and at the ſame time affirm that our ſight is nothing leſs than perfect.

The poet who writes to the mind's eye, and collects his images through the ſame medium, lies under a great diſadvantage in

in compariſon with the painter. The original, from whence the latter draws his copy, is an outward object, and his picture, when finiſh'd, is addreſs'd to the viſual ſenſe: whereas the original, from whence the former takes copy, is perceived by the mind's eye, and addreſs'd alſo to the mental perception of his reader. In order, therefore, clearly and diſtinctly to convey his images, the poet is obliged to make uſe of allegories, metaphors, and illuſtrations from outward objects, and from things viſible, to deduce the evidence of things not ſeen.

Thus, properly ſpeaking, the works, which we call works of invention, ought to contain the hiſtory of the mind of man; and he is the beſt writer, who repreſents it moſt truly.

If invention then be only a capacity of finding, and not of creating, we muſt endeavour (if we would exerciſe this faculty) to to keep our mind's eye open, and on the ſearch, and not cloſe it up by bending all

our thoughts on the gratification of ſome preſent humour. The reader alſo may be ſaid to partake of the invention of the author, when he finds his own acquaintance in the true repreſentations of nature. Thus the reader who hath moſt truly conſidered and digeſted the ſentiments which he reads, muſt be a man of the beſt taſte, and muſt find moſt pleaſure in the peruſal of authors worth the reading. It is but to preſerve candor enough to keep up an impartial attention, and inſtead of being actuated by a falſe ſhame of ignorance, to know when properly to confeſs myſelf a learner; and I have it in my power, as far as my capacity will reach, to command any knowledge that is extant in the whole univerſe.

Would mankind be but contented without the continual uſe of that little, but ſignificant pronoun, *mine*, or *my own*, with what luxurious delight might they revel in the property of others! Every man poſſeſſed of a competency enough to obtain neceſſaries, without the taſk of hard labour,

bour, might, innocent of theft or pillage, reap enjoyment from all the productions of the induſtry and faculties of half mankind. He, like the queen of the bees, might partake in the fruit of the labours of all the hive. The works of nature and of art combine to delight his ſenſes. To omit the ennumeration of all natural beauties, ſuch as hills, dales, woods, rivers, the fragrance of flowering ſhrubs, the melody of birds, *&c.* which are all at the command of the pooreſt peaſant; 'tis in my power with truth to declare, that to pleaſe my eyes the vain man builds magnificent palaces, and toils for riches in order to raiſe for my view a beautiful ſtructure: for the ſame purpoſe ſerves the moſt finiſh'd pieces of the painter's art: the muſician toils to gratify my ſenſe of hearing, and the poet's pen is employ'd for my delight and entertainment: but if envy makes me ſicken at the ſight of every thing that is excellent out of my own poſſeſſion; then will the ſweeteſt food be ſharp as vinegar, and every beauty will, in my depraved eyes, appear as deformity.

Men look on knowledge, which they learn, or might learn from others, as they do on the moſt beautiful ſtructures, which are not their own: in outward objects they would rather behold their own hogſty than their neighbour's palace; and in mental ones, would prefer one grain of knowledge, gain'd by their own obſervation, to all the wiſdom of a thouſand *Solomons*.

It is the remark of a very ingenious *French* writer, that ſcarcely any man ever ſoared ſo high in knowledge as he might have done by more intenſe induſtry. And I believe the chief baulk to this induſtry is, the great aptitude of the human mind immediately to pronounce the perfection of all its own productions. We are inclined to do by the produce of our minds as by thoſe of our bodies: namely, admire them for being ours; and inſtead of taking the proper pains to form our children into objects of eſteem and admiration, we ſwear, although their deformity

is

is apparent to all impartial eyes, that they are patterns of perfection: we are angry that others are not as blind as ourſelves, and, knight-errant like, are at all times ready to defend the beauties of our own *Dulcinea*.

A poet is not only a mental painter (as generally allowed) but architect, ſculptor, *&c.* And *Horace* confirms this as his opinion, by illuſtrating his rules for poetic compoſition by every outward object he could deviſe. In joining things congruous together, ſo as to form a reſemblance according to nature, the judgment alone muſt be employed; and in mental objects, where outward lines and plummets cannot be uſed, the judgment muſt be the mental rule, and make boundaries for proper proportions; but in the animating and adorning parts accident hath often had a great ſhare, and many a fine ſtroke, I believe, for which the poet hath almoſt gained the credit of inſpiration, may have been entirely owing to a lucky hit. The finiſhing a moſt famous piece

of ancient painting we are told was owing to the rageful deſpair of the painter, who, by throwing his bruſh wet with paint, in order to deface what he deſpaired to compleat, gave that expreſſive ſtroke which all his labour before could not effect. One of the moſt beautiful adornments in architecture, the capital of the *Corinthian* column, was found out, as *Perrault* ſays, by accident, or apparent accident, namely, the ſeeing ſome leaves of the acanthus winding themſelves round the handle of a baſket placed on a young lady's tomb. The reaſon I ſay apparent accident, is, that although the ſeeing ſuch leaves in ſuch a careleſs form was accident; yet the uſe which was made of it was owing to the penetration of the architect, who, by habit, had accuſtomed his mind to make uſe of outward objects; and thus the finiſhed piece of the painter was, in the firſt place, owing to his candor, in ſeeing that his art was baffled by the trying circumſtances of his ſubject; and in the next place, to his not being aſhamed to acknowledge, that the finiſhed excellence of his inimitable

picture

picture aroſe from a ſtroke in which he was conſcious of having no more merit, as to the manual operation, than might be attributed even to the pencil itſelf.

The ſtamp of immortality, or rather of duration equal to mortality itſelf, which we have reaſon to believe is on ſome poems, muſt be made by a judgment directed by modeſty and candor, which will not ſuffer the poet to think there is a magic in his touch which immediately brings all things to perfection. This modeſty engages him, before he vents his thoughts, to examine and re-examine them; and not being partial to them as his own, he will awaken all his faculties, in order to cultivate and exalt his genius to the height, before he brings his productions into public view.

If modeſty and candor are neceſſary to an author in his judgment of his own works, no leſs are they in his reader. And when I hear every pert boy and girl, juſt come from ſchool, and who ſhould not yet be out of the hands of their governors,

admitted to sit in judgment on *Milton*, *Shakeſpear*, &c. the face of things ſeems reverſed, the infant is become the maſter, and the maſter is forced to ſubmit to be the ſcholar.

Should an ingenious mechanic find out a machine in watch-making, or any other art, which was by experience proved to be for the uſe and pleaſure of mankind; an honeſt indignation would ariſe in every generous boſom to hear it criticiſed, pulled to pieces, and condemned, by ſuch as are not only ignorant of its multiform wheels and connexions, but who know not even its common uſe.

The learned *Boſſu*, in his diſcourſe on epic poetry, hath very intelligibly ſet forth the rules of *Ariſtotle*, as formed on *Homer*. He hath compared the fables of both the Iliad and Odyſſee with that of the Æneid of *Virgil*, and by adding the opinion of *Horace* on fable, action, character, *&c.* he hath ſhewn how exactly *Ariſtotle*, *Homer*, *Virgil*,

Virgil, and *Horace*, all agreed in their ideas of epic poetry.

May I be allowed to ſuppoſe, that the chief reaſon for ſuch their agreement of opinion, was owing to their not each contending for the maſtery?

Ariſtotle drew his rules from *Homer*, as his *maſter*; *Virgil*, in the ſame manner, imitated this firſt great pattern, and it is moſt likely, aſſiſted his judgment by *Ariſtotle*'s rules; *Horace* drew his precepts from the ſame ſources with *Virgil*; and *Boſſu*, in the cleareſt manner, hath ſhewn the connexion and co-incidence of opinion in them all four: and this alſo by modeſtly forming his judgment from them as models, and not with an air of ſuperiority deciding their merits or demerits.

" [b] Ainſi (dit elle) avant que de juger " d'un poëme, il faut rendre nôtre juge-" ment

[b] *Boſſu* traite du Poëme Epique, liv. vi. chap. 8.

" ment regulier, & l'éprouver ſur les ou-
" vrages excellens des meilleurs maîtres.
" S'ils ne nous plaiſent pas, nous devons
" plûtôt croire que le défaut eſt dans nôtre
" jugement, que dans ces modeles : &
" s'ils nous plaiſent, nous pouvons nous
" fier à nous mêmes avec plus d'aſſu-
" rance, ſuivant cette judicieuſe penſé de
" *Quintilien:* que celui à qui *Ciceron* plaît,
" doit par là reconnoître qu'il a beau-
" coup profité."

In works of the imagination, the imagination muſt be firſt employed to awaken the attention, and to lead us afterwards to the exerciſe of the judgment. The pleaſure which *Ariſtotle* muſt take in reading the works of *Homer*, moſt probably led him to employ his judgment in finding out cauſes for that pleaſure.

Whether a man who cannot write an epic poem, is, or is not, qualified to judge of one, is a diſpute on which I ſhall not attempt to enter; yet modeſty and candor,

dor, I ſhould imagine, muſt induce a critic to draw his rules from the higheſt and beſt exemplars of that kind of writing, which he makes the ſubject of his enquiry; and I could almoſt venture to aſſert, that *Ariſtotle* would have bluſhed to have attempted the propounding a ſet of rules for what he could neither execute himſelf, nor of which he had not yet ſeen any example: but much leſs would he have attempted a criticiſm on epic poetry, whilſt two ſuch poems as the Iliad and the Odyſſee were extant, without deducing all his precepts from the father, the inventor, and the judicious executor of that kind of writing.

I know not whether it would be too bold an aſſertion to ſay, that *candor* makes capacity; yet it is I believe indiſputably true, that by this alone it hath the power of fully exerting all its vigour. But in order to try the truth of any obſervation relating to the mind, the eaſieſt method is to illuſtrate it by outward objects.

If,

If, for inſtance, a man was to ſweat and labour all the days of his life to fill a cheſt which was already full, the abſurdity of his vain endeavour would be glaring: in the ſame manner, when the human mind is filled and ſtuffed with notions, brought thither by fallacious inclinations, there is no room for truth to enter; candor being baniſhed, paſſions alone bear the ſway.

——— *Function*
Is ſmother'd in ſurmiſe; and nothing is
But what is not.

Truth is the very reverſe of what is ſaid of that fickle goddeſs Fortune;

She flys thoſe that ſue,
And thoſe that fly purſue.

For truth meets thoſe who affectionately invite her, and is unattainable by none but thoſe who deteſt her embraces, and fly her as their enemy. But,

After

After all that has been ſaid in various ſhapes, by many various writers, concerning JUDGMENT, TASTE, INVENTION, &c. they all and ſeverally mean no more than THE PERCEPTION OF TRUTH, which way ſoever it is offered to our view.

PART

PART the THIRD.

SCENE I.

——— I will mix with you in induſtry
To pleaſe—but whom? Attentive auditors;
Such as will join their profit with their pleaſure:
For theſe I'll prodigally ſpend myſelf
And ſpeak away my ſpirits into air;
For theſe I'll melt my brain into invention,
Coin new conceits, and hang my richeſt words
As poliſh'd jewels in their bounteous ears.

BEN JOHNSON,
Every Man out of his Humour.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

AS I have ventured on uſing a ſingle word at once to ſignify all the evil paſſions turmoiling the mind of man, to ſpare the repetition of the various paſſions of which the *Turba* is deſigned to convey a full

full idea; I ſhould, on the other hand, be very glad if I might be admitted under one word alſo, to convey an idea of all that I could wiſh my hearers to underſtand, when I would deſcribe a boſom fraught with gentle peace; a heart caſting out thoſe tormentors which compoſe the *Turba*, and kindly yielding itſelf up to the enjoyment of its own tranquillity. To this RIGHTNESS of mind, this completion of wiſdom and goodneſs (as far as the human mind can tread the road to perfection) I would, if allowed, give the name of the DEXTRA.

The *Cry*, without the leaſt examination, loudly clamoured againſt the uſe of this word; declaring that they did not, nor could they underſtand its meaning: but they ſuppoſed it was ſome more gibberiſh of her own invention.

Portia. Was it hard to be underſtood, I would not attempt the introducing it; but it is ſo eaſy to be explained, it is to me ſo expreſſive, and yet ſo ſimple, that a child

child might ſoon be informed of its utmoſt ſignification.

And now the *Cry*, in univerſal chorus, repeatedly exclaimed againſt any explanation, declaring, that they would not be treated like children, and would farther exert the right of judgment, ſo as abſolutely to forbid *Portia*'s ever mentioning it any more.

But great as they imagined themſelves, they ſoon found that there was a greater in preſence; for *Una*, with a commanding voice, declared, that ſuch tyranny, as to condemn any one unheard, ſhould not be ſuffered before her; and that *Portia* was at full liberty to explain her reaſons for the uſe of this word. It will then be time enough, ſaid ſhe, to judge whether it be intelligible or adequate to her purpoſe; that is, whether it be properly adapted to anſwer the real uſe of language, the making our ideas clearly underſtood.

Portia.

Portia. Dextra in *Latin*, when applied to the hand, ſignifies the right, as ſiniſtra means the left ;—and ——

The *Cry*, who had been forcibly ſilenced by *Una*'s voice, now again roſe up in a univerſal tumult, and declared, that if they muſt learn new languages to underſtand her meaning, they were determined to hear no more. They would not be her butts, in order for her to puff off her own learning, and to treat them with contempt.

Portia. There is nothing that I would ſay on this ſubject, for which the leaſt degree of learning is neceſſary. For example, *Milton* ſays, that the *Meſſiah* conquered his enemies with his *better* hand. Surely if I aſked any learned friend, why *Milton* ſays the better hand ? and he ſhould tell me, it was an expreſſion borrowed from the *Latin* authors who made the ſame word ſometimes (as when applied to omens) ſtand for good, better, *&c.* and ſometimes for the hand, which we call by the name of the

the right hand, I might without any farther learning underſtand *Milton*'s meaning: and what is there in this, O ye *Cry*, that you might not all know as well as myſelf?

At the image that *Portia* knew no more than themſelves, the *Cry* began to drop their furious looks, and the turba within them to abate ſomething of their ſtings.

Portia. Learning is not only unneceſſary in order to uſe the word dextra in the ſenſe I ſpeak of it, but on further conſideration, it may perhaps appear that there is nothing ſo very new or uncommon in this manner of expreſſion as was at firſt imagined.

I believe it will be found, that nothing more certainly fixes the true meaning of a word than examining its oppoſite or reverſe. Now the word in oppoſition to dexter is ſiniſter; and if we only reflect on what daily paſſes in common converſation, we ſhall ſee that we have all naturalized the

the word ſiniſter, and made it alſo applicable to the workings of the mind. What ears amongſt us have not been accuſtomed to the words, ſiniſter views, ſiniſter deſigns, *&c?*

The *Cry* now ſhouted with applauſe [miſtake me not, reader, nor accuſe me of repreſenting an unnatural fact] for it was with ſelf-applauſe, on the diſcovery that *Portia* had not, nor could ſay any thing, which was not familiar to their apprehenſions. With one united voice they declared, that they had been accuſtomed to her expreſſions all their lives. In a tone, much ſofter than uſual, they ſaid, "We agree with you, *Portia*, that "there is nothing extraordinary in your "application of dexter and ſiniſter; you "do but talk the language familiar even "to children and the vulgar."

Portia knew this to be a fancied league of peace which could not hold long; but taking the opportunity of this temporary calm, ſhe thus proceeded ——

Portia.

Portia. The word dexter is not leſs naturalized than ſiniſter; for nothing is more common than to ſay, a man is poſſeſſed of dexterity, and that he is dextrous in all the exerciſes of riding, fencing, or the like: and amongſt prize fighters, it is a frequent phraſe to ſay, "that blow was "dextrouſly given."

True, *Portia*, (ſaid the *Cry*) we are all unanimous in our opinions, that the very loweſt and moſt vulgar of the people uſe this ſort of language. There is nothing in what you have ſpoke beyond the meaneſt comprehenſion.

Portia. Hitherto indeed the words dextrous, dextrouſly, dexterity, have, in the *Engliſh* language, been applied only to the activity of the body. But this I believe doth not ariſe from the impropriety of applying them to the mind, but rather from our greater aptneſs to adapt proper terms expreſſive of outward objects than of the objects of mental view. If a man, in the manu-

manufacture of weaving, was to employ his fingers in diſentangling a heap of confuſed threads or ſtrings of any kind, that were got together, and ſhould be ſo lucky at to compleat his deſign, we ſhould ſay, that he had dextrouſly unravelled the intricate knot, and claſſed every thread in its proper order, ſo as to enable him to go on with his work. Should any perſon, willing to unravel the intricate mazes of the human mind, ſo divide and diſtinguiſh one paſſion from the other, as to range them each in its proper claſs, might we not ſay, that ſuch a man had dextrouſly ſeparated truth from error?

Una ſmiled; and the *Cry* began to look aſkew.

Portia. Since in the relation of my ſtory (eſpecially as *Una* condeſcends to be one of my audience) I would wiſh that my hearers ſhould be truly acquainted with the minds of thoſe perſons, of whom I ſhall be obliged often to make mention: all the indulgence I aſk is, to be ſuffered to tranſlate the word

dextra into the mind, and that I may uſe it to expreſs mental vigour and wiſdom with the ſame freedom as *ſiniſter* is uſed to expreſs mental weakneſs, or that paltry mimic of true wiſdom, ſhuffling cunning.

The *Cry* began now to grow into their uſual alarm; for they dreaded what uſe *Portia* might make of their late conceſſions; but collecting themſelves into a heap, they fixed their heavy eyes, as if buſied in profound contemplation, and for the preſent only choruſs'd themſelves into a gloomy univerſal hum.

Portia. When we perceive, with certainty, any thing whatever to be in the mind of one human creature, we may, I believe, upon a due ſcrutiny, diſcover its reverſe in the mind of ſome other. If this be true, and if it is allowed that the word *ſiniſter* can be ever properly applied to any human mind, then may the word *dexter* be with as great propriety applied to ſome other. I think I know ſeveral characters

to which the two different words are equally applicable; and to bring my hearers acquainted with thoſe characters, I know not of any method more adequate than this, of naturalizing the word *dextra* into the mental language.

In all language converſant about the human mind, we are under a neceſſity of adopting metaphors taken from outward objects. I cannot recollect one yet made uſe of more fit in all points to expreſs the perfection of the exerciſe of the mental qualities, than what I now beg leave to introduce; and ſo far am I from wanting to make learning neceſſary to the underſtanding it, that its eaſineſs to be comprehended by the moſt illiterate, if they have no ſiniſter views in its excluſion, made me propoſe it, and gave me, I own, ſome pleaſure in its adoption.

I have fully conſidered it in various lights, and have found great amuſement in obſerving how thoroughly the analogy between

between a man dextrous in body holds in almoſt every inſtance.

The man, who with his right hand (or indeed with either hand that by habit is the moſt dextrous) endeavours to help and aſſiſt another, exerts his whole ſtrength, and is generally enabled to compaſs his friendly deſign; or if a blow is neceſſary to be given, the dextrous hand hits the intended mark, and gives juſt the force deſigned; whereas a blow given through paſſion, with the aukwardneſs of a weak-handed ſtroke, may beat out an eye, flatten a noſe, or indeed aiming at an enemy may ſometimes hit a friend.

The mind fraught with the *dextra*, hath the due uſe of all its faculties; it keeps a ſteady pace, is ready and able to aſſiſt its friends, and if it is neceſſary for ſelf-defence, or quelling the inſolence of malice, its wit ſtrikes properly, and with judgment; nor ever blindly frantic doth it deal about its blows without diſtinction.

The mind miſled by the *ſiniſtra* is the emblem of weakneſs, it is unable to aſſiſt others, or direct itſelf; yet does it boaſt, that from the exercife of ſhuffling cunning, it is in poſſeſſion of the *dextra:* and in this moſt truly doth it follow the practice of thoſe jugglers, who by ſhuffling contrivances, and all ſort of indirect methods, impoſe upon our ſenſes, and yet honour their paltry juggling with the name of true dexterity of hand.

The *Cry* had drawn themſelves into a ſad dilemma from their acknowledging that they could eaſily underſtand *Portia*'s meaning. They hardly knew how ſo ſoon to reſume their affected ignorance, and continued to lay their heads cloſe together, to hum and groan, as if they had been under ſome very great affliction.

Portia, to relieve them from their preſent uneaſineſs, quitted the ſubject which ſeem'd to give them ſuch pain, and thus went on with her ſtory.

SCENE

SCENE II.

When churchmen ſcripture for the claſſics quit!
Dr. YOUNG's Univ. Paſ.

PORTIA. UNA. THE CRY.

PORTIA.

MY acquaintance with *Melantha*, the young lady whom I at firſt mentioned to have introduced me to *Nicanor*'s family, began from an intimacy which ſubſiſted between my mother and an aunt of hers, by whom ſhe was brought up to *London* a few months before I was deprived of the bleſſing and protection of the beſt of parents. Nor was it long before death bereft *Melantha* alſo of her affectionate aunt.

I had from my own inclination, as well as a ſenſe of my duty, ſubmitted with great

cheerfulneſs to the exceſſive retired way of life which was my mother's choice, and had therefore contracted very few acquaintance.

Melantha on becoming her own miſtreſs, and being in poſſeſſion alſo of all her aunt's effects, which were very conſiderable, entered into a more gay manner of living, whilſt I continued as much as poſſible to keep myſelf out of thoſe hurries, called pleaſures and diverſions, which to me, for the moſt part, appear only as ſo many methods of intoxicating our ſenſes, and ſquandering away what by moſt wiſe men has been termed the greateſt treaſure of our lives, namely, our time.

There is not, I believe, a greater let to knowledge than the living what I call a look-there life; for whilſt the eyes are thus continually engaged by outward objects, how ſhould we find any leiſure for looking within?

Mighty

Mighty ſententious, indeed! ſaid the *Cry*, with a ſort of contemptuous toſs of all their heads.

Portia. *Melantha* had what is called an exceeding handſome face: her complexion was clear, although not of the whiteſt grain, her features were extremely regular, her eyes were very much admired, being ſhineing, large and black; yet when any thing ruffled or diſcompoſed her temper, they ſhot forth ſuch a fierceneſs and malignity, they were covered with ſuch lowering brows, and every feature ſuffered ſuch diſtortions, as rendered all her beauty little leſs than deformity. She was tall and thin, yet was but ill made and aukward in her perſon; and from having been bred intirely in the country, ſhe wanted that gentility, which had it been added to the beauty of her face would have entitled her to public admiration. She had the natural flow of ſpirits, which youth, and a competent ſhare of beauty, joined to an independent fortune, ſeldom fails to give. This, with

but a very moderate ſhare of underſtanding, made her no unpleaſing companion; and the great fondneſs which ſhe either had, or expreſs'd to have for me, kept her ſo much upon her guard in her behaviour, that I ſeldom ſaw her in the leaſt out of temper; and thus ſhe in a manner forcibly for a long time ingroſſed all the intimacy I beſtow'd on any one. My intimacy with *Melantha* had continued about two years, when by perpetual importunity, and much againſt my will (for I loved not making new acquaintance) ſhe introduced me to *Cordelia*.

The cat in the fable, which by the young man's prayers was turned into a woman, and who on the ſight of a mouſe, forgetting her transform'd ſtate, jump'd out of bed, earneſt to follow her uſual diverſion, could not more eagerly purſue her deſtined prey than I have purſued any human creature, who would give me leave to energize my favourite affections.

To apply the fable, I may ſay, that to meet with ſuch a perſon is my mouſe, it is my food, I cannot live without it. Whoever, therefore, of my acquaintance will ſuffer me to haye the beſt opinion of them, muſt obtain ſome ſhare of my affections: but if the object be not fully adequate to the purpoſe, my heart is but barely kept alive, and is in a ſort of meagre half-ſtarved condition.

Such was my ſituation with regard to *Melantha*. As I delight both in reading and ſociety, I deal with my living acquaintance as I do with authors: there are ſome books whoſe proper habitation is a window, in order that they may lie ready at hand to employ a leiſure minute, but which we can lay down without regret on the entrance of the moſt trifling viſitors, and can eaſily bear the interruption of even a thundering rap at the door.

Portia's putting in the word *even* gave great diſturbance to the *Cry*, who moſt of

them had experienced a joyful beat of heart on every ſuch thundering rap: for they conſidered that in proportion to the number of thoſe raps, they ſhould be eſteem'd of conſequence in their own neighbourhood.

Portia. If I was an heathen poet, and had an inclination to indulge a little whim, I would repreſent thunder as a noiſe made by *Jupiter*'s guards againſt ſome celeſtial door whenever *Juno* went a viſiting. I could imagine alſo that *Pallas* and *Venus* drew up repeated petitions to the father of the gods, in order to prevail with him to grant them the ſame privileges; but that *Juno* claims ſuch a diſtinction as an honour due only to herſelf, being both wife and ſiſter to *Jupiter*, and the acknowledged queen of heaven. I fancy if the invention was but managed by as able hands, that the three goddeſſes might make as entertaining a quarrel about this thundering rap, as about the famous apple decreed by *Paris* to the queen of love.

The

The goddeſs of wiſdom would certainly make a rather leſs ridiculous figure in this contention, than where ſhe expects the preference to be given to her before the goddeſs of beauty, and yet knows that a man is to be the umpire.

But to deſcend from the ſky, I remember it is really recorded in hiſtory, that one of the greateſt revolutions in the *Roman* empire was cauſed by a plebeian's wife not being able to bear the uneaſy ſound of the faſces, and the rattle at the door before the arrival of her ſiſter, whoſe huſband was then conſul. So grating was this noiſe of diſtinction, which belonged only to the conſulſhip, in the ears of this good woman, when it preceded the equipage of any other lady but herſelf, that ſhe could not ſleep in peace till ſhe had ſtirred up her huſband to make a mutiny in the ſtate, and to inſiſt on it that the plebeians ſhould have a chance of the honour of the conſulſhip, as well as the patricians.

Una ſmiled benignant at *Portia*'s whimſical flight. Not that ſhe thought it any ſubject for admiration, but becauſe ſuch trifling indulgences of the fancy are proofs of a joyous heart, and a mind unincumbered by the heavy load of malice; for whatever is inoffenſive muſt be uncenſured by *Una*.

But with far other eyes do the *Cry* view any whimſical flight of the imagination, be it ever ſo innocent. They turned and twiſted this trifling fancy of *Portia*'s into ten thouſand various forms, and extorted from it matter of the higheſt offence. They declared that ſhe had treated the gods and goddeſſes too lightly; for the *Pantheon* was to them a deep ſtudy; that, and a poetical dictionary, made indeed the chief part of ſome of their libraries. The heathen mythology they look'd upon as a ſort of bible, and would have been more aſhamed of their ignorance in it than in any part of the old teſtament.

Not

Not to know who was the father of *Abraham*, or whether *Nathan* was a prieſt or a prophet, they would ſuffer any one to laugh off, and would take for a good excuſe the ſaying that you had not look'd into the ſtory ſince you came from ſchool: but if any perſon had forgot who was the father of *Jupiter*, ſhould miſtake in the proper office of *Mercury*, or ſhould talk of the fine eyes of *Cupid*, whom fiction has pleaſed to repreſent as blind; all their ſneers, and attempted witticiſms, which they keep ready at hand upon ſuch occaſions, would be caſt forth againſt ſuch an ignorant blunderer.

This ſort of knowledge the *Cry* think neceſſary towards ſhining in converſation; and therefore is it of the utmoſt conſequence to the chief purpoſe of their ever-buſy buſtling lives.

After they had expreſſed their cenſure of *Portia* for ſpeaking thus lightly of their higheſt learning, they extracted from her words

words an abſolute declaration, that ſhe thought herſelf equal in a poetical genius to *Ovid*, or even to *Homer* himſelf. They accuſed her alſo of a paltry vanity in boaſting of her memory by relating to them an incident out of the *Roman* hiſtory.

Theſe were the outward accuſations with which the *Cry* thought proper to charge *Portia*; but if they would have ſpoke plainly, and confeſſed the real offence of her fancy, they muſt have ſaid, "Where "is the galling ſting of pointed ſatire? where "is the ſhame-bringing ridicule? where is "the opportunity for mounting ourſelves "aloft into the delightful regions of con-"tempt, at the expence to ſome others of "pain and mortification?" Neceſſary ingredients all in every ſtory, in every flight of imagination calculated to fill the *Cry* with any the leaſt degree of pleaſure.

Portia. Let me intreat you, O ye *Cry*, to have more friendly regard for your own peace, than to be thus labouring about nothing. My trifling whim I think not worth

worth one moment's conſideration, and could I have imagined that it would not, as it deſerves, have paſſed unheeded, I would not have mentioned it. But yet if the mangling and worrying it about into ſo many various meanings (of all which it is perfectly innocent) can give you any ſort of pleaſure, you are heartily welcome ſtill to chace it till you are as tired of it as I am myſelf already. But I pray ye now be only ſo kind to yourſelves, as not to fill your minds with fruitleſs diſpleaſure.

This careleſsneſs of *Portia*'s about her own fancies, or their cenſures of them, enraged the *Cry* to the higheſt degree of anger. The *Turba* rouſed and rolled about their ſtings in their unhappy boſoms, and ſwelled them into the moſt tumultuous ſtorms, at the fearful apprehenſion that there was no real cauſe for their diſpleaſure; which was no more than, as *Shakeſpear* ſays of jealouſy, a monſter born upon itſelf. As it is the characteriſtic of minds inhabited by the *Turba*, to be continually laying plots and ſtratagems, which tend to

no

no other effect than teazing and tormenting themſelves; the *Cry* (laying their heads cloſe together) were now in deep conſultation by what means they ſhould next abuſe the then preſent object of their hatred: whilſt *Portia*, according to the conſtant cuſtom of thoſe whoſe minds are filled by the *dextra*, amuſed herſelf with her own innocent fancies; and taking the advantage of the *Cry*'s inattention, ſhe thus addreſs'd her generous protectreſs, whoſe ears are ever open to hear with candor, and to judge without partiality or prejudice.

Portia. The indulgence, O *Una*, that you kindly give to my unreſerved manner of expreſſing my thoughts on all occaſions, emboldens me to utter another of my whims, which came into my head on the *Cry*'s high admiration of all heathen learning.

Suppoſe an *Indian*, or any pagan worſhipper of many gods, was on the account given him of the Chriſtian religion by an *Engliſhman*, to be ſo far inclined to be converted

verted as to take a journey into *England*, on purpoſe to enquire fully into its doctrines: it would not be unnatural on ſuch an occaſion for him to be particularly inquiſitive into the manner in which we educate our youth; for in their inſtruction he would reaſonably expect to learn the grounds and ſubſtance of the national religion. But in his viſits to our great and public ſchools, would it be poſſible for him to avoid reflecting on the want of veracity in his friend, who told him that the Chriſtians worſhipped but one God? would he not be apt to think that the Chriſtians had as many gods as the heathens, only bearing different names? for one he would think was worſhipped under the name of *Homer*, another of *Virgil*, and another, who had no ſmall number of votaries, was called by the name of *Horace*. On his return home, he would undoubtedly inform his countrymen, that the doctrines of theſe deities, and their religious rites, were ſo hard to be learnt, that the *Engliſh* youth were forced to undergo a very rigorous diſcipline, even to the loſs of blood, before they

they could attain ſuch knowledge. Would it be poſſible to make this pagan believe that *Homer*, *Virgil*, &c. were only the names of certain men who wrote for the amuſement of themſelves and others, in the reſpective language of their countries? that ſo far from containing the doctrines of our religion, they were filled with an account of fabled gods, to which it would be held impious in me to give any credit; and that the book, which really contained the treaſure of that religion we profeſs, is neither taught, nor ſeldom ſo much as heard of amongſt them? ſhould it alſo be added, that the inſtructors of our youth are themſelves generally the prieſts of our religion; would not the intended convert be apt to cry out,

Ridiculum eſt & non credendum mihi!

Not one word of what *Portia* had laſt been ſaying was heard by the *Cry*; but finding, from all their different propoſals amongſt each other of contradicting and cavilling againſt her words, that this was not

not ſo proper a time as they hoped might hereafter offer for inſulting her, they renewed their uſual kind of attention; and called on her to go on with her account of *Melantha*. For the *Cry* are as penetrating as the great politician in the *Rehearſal*: they are very apt to know when they ſpy a brother, and were therefore in hopes of receiving great pleaſure from the ſtory of *Melantha*.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Who for the poor renown of being ſmart
Would leave a dagger in a brother's heart?
Univerſal Paſſion.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

BEFORE I was introduced into the family of *Nicanor*, *Melantha* was to me (like one of the books before mentioned) as a proper inhabitant of the window: and although I frequently converſed with her, yet was not any interruption much uneaſineſs. But when I became intimate in *Nicanor*'s family, that is, from the moment I could with any propriety ſay they were of my acquaintance, I found every

every interruption painful. As in the reading any of the beſt authors, ſuch as *Milton*, *Shakeſpear*, &c. we forget, for the time, that there are any other books in the world; we are abſorbed in the delight which they give us, and are compleatly ſatisfied: ſo when I was converſant in the family of *Nicanor*, I, for the time, forgot every other object, my mind was fully employed, and perfectly gratified.

To meet with converſation in which I could, without any painful reſerve, open my whole heart; and where I could be underſtood, and not have my words miſinterpreted, and tortured into meanings I never thought of, hath been the chief purſuit of my life. Yet have I been generally cenſured for a blameable reſerve; but I verily believe that an apparent reſerve is very often the effect of a natural openneſs of temper.

The *Cry* were now ſo certain that *Portia* had uttered a paradoxical abſurdity, that they were in the very height of their good humour and merriment; whilſt *Una* looked a little

a little fearful in what manner *Portia* would prove her aſſertion.

Portia perceiving from *Una*'s looks what paſſed within her boſom, haſtened to relieve her friendly anxiety.

Portia. The man whoſe diſpoſition is naturally reſerved and ſuſpicious, can play the part of openneſs juſt to the pitch he chuſes, and always retains a power of returning back into himſelf, whenever he imagines his intereſt requires it. He, without difficulty, can throw off the borrowed robe with which he cloathed himſelf for a ſeaſon; whereas the man of a free and unreſerved diſpoſition, muſt keep a watchful guard over the natural bent of his temper; he muſt, in moſt company, be greatly reſerved, otherwiſe having once in the leaſt ſlackened the rein, and given a looſe to his higheſt pleaſure, he cannot help imagining himſelf ſurrounded by friends; and therefore he thinks aloud, and wantons in the freedom of an unlimited confidence. But as experience in time

time teaches the danger of ſuch a freedom of ſpeech, the open-hearted man is obliged to wear the borrowed robe of reſerve; for he cannot throw it off by halves, nor begin to caſt off his heavy load without ſuffering his natural ſkin inevitably to appear naked and unguarded againſt the ſharp ſtings of ſpite and malice. I cannot take any delight, nor ſpeak with the leaſt freedom in company, where rancour, malignity, impiety, or profligacy, are continually breaking forth; nor doth it, in my opinion, make any very eſſential difference whether ſuch diſcourſes are ſupported by wit, or admired only for their own natural beauties. I am indeed moſt grieved when wit is ſo baſely employed, becauſe it hath more chance of doing miſchief. Hurtful ridicule is hateful to my hearing, and I eſteem thoſe alone the trueſt objects of it, who are moſt delighted with its practice. Who can be unreſerved where miſchievous fallacy is the ſandy foundation on which the whole converſation is built? ſuch intercourſes are to me ſo many real tragedies. What can be more tragical than

for

for a ſet of human creatures to aſſemble together, under the pretence of friendſhip and good-fellowſhip, in order only to take every opportunity of ſlyly hurting, and bringing one another to ſhame? For ſuch muſt be the principal aim of ridicule, under whatever name of mirth, humour, *&c.* it may endeavour to hide its biting head.

The *Cry* were now in as great a fright as if *Portia* had viſibly ſhewn a deſign of mangling, or chopping off one of their principal limbs. Taunting ridicule is their ſtrongeſt hold: once bereave them of that ſupport to their converſation, and you would almoſt take from them the uſe of ſpeech. Loudly therefore did they vociferate in praiſe of this their beſt friend, and with an univerſal clamor, accuſed *Portia* of having a gloomy averſion to all mirth and good-humour.

Portia. Innocent mirth and real good-humour are the joy and delight of my ſoul; ſuch mirth I mean as deſcribed by *Spenſer* in his *Tears of the Muſes*,

Fine

Fine countrefeaſance and unhurtful ſport,
Delight and laughter deck'd in ſeemly ſort.

But never are they to be found in thoſe tragic ſcenes I have already mentioned. Another property of which is, that altho' the time of their action is ſeldom more than three or four hours, their conſequences often go through the lives of the actors. They pretend indeed, like *Laertes* in *Hamlet*, to play only in jeſt, and carouſe in flowing bowls over their contention; yet are their foils like his, generally touched with poiſon; and the moſt inveterate and laſting enmities follow every ſtroke. Inexorable hatred hath, I believe, oftener ariſen from a biting, taunting jeſt, than from any other cauſe whatever. Another part of theſe delightful tragedies is, the continual loud din of the kettle-drums and trumpets; not beat at the diſtance of the ſtage, but ſounding cloſe in your ear; I mean the noiſe and clamor which is raiſed on every freſh imaginary jeſt: for noiſe and clamor are the conſtant attendants on

fallacy, and are indeed the very beſt invention to prevent the appearance of truth. In ſuch a ſet of company, where noiſe is miſtaken for mirth, and where the chief pleaſure propoſed ſeems to be like that of lady *Betty Modiſh*, to take off, and drive the placed ſmile from every countenance: who that delights in placed ſmiles can take any joy, or ever be unreſerved! *Oliver* indeed often hath cenſured me for thus cloſing up my heart, and hath called it a ſelf-ſufficiency of mind, and a proud contempt of others.

And very rightly he calls it ſo, ſaid the *Cry*, with univerſal conſent.

Portia. But I know that whenever my heart is thus cloſed up, it is the fault of my company, and not owing to my own diſpoſition. Let *Ferdinand*, let *Cordelia* be aſked, if I was ever reſerved in their company.

Great was the joy of the *Cry* on their preſent diſcovery, that *Portia*'s openneſs to *Ferdi-*

Ferdinand and *Cordelia* was owing intirely to the opinion ſhe had of their underſtandings; and that ſhe had therefore by implication confeſſed what ſhe had ſo often denied, namely, that want of capacity in any one was to her an object of contempt.

Portia. It is true, I have an opinion of their underſtanding.

Have we found you out? ſaid the *Cry*, fixing their thoughts on their own penetration.

Portia. But my unreſerved openneſs of mind, my joyful freedom of converſation with them, is fixed on a much ſtronger foundation than that opinion: it is built on the firmeſt footing, on the preſence of the *dextra*, and the abſence of the *ſiniſtra*. I hope contempt, as I have before declared, is not an inhabitant in my boſom; I hope I never ſhould, in the ſenſe our Saviour ſpeaks it, call my brother fool; but if there is any contempt in me, the want of what we commonly call parts or underſtanding,

ſtanding, would never ſet it in motion; and I think I could honeſtly lay my hand upon my heart, and without the leaſt equivocation or mental reſerve, boldly aſſert, that during the courſe of my whole life, I never once endeavoured to raiſe the leaſt degree of uneaſineſs in any one individual of the human race by the exertion of an inſolent ſuperiority of unſtanding.

I have always received the utmoſt pleaſure in conſidering theſe lines of the poet.

Parts may be prais'd, good-nature is ador'd,
Then draw your wit as ſeldom as your ſword;
And never on the weak. ———

The *Cry* now made two very *coherent* diſcoveries.—The firſt was, that *Portia* did not exert this ſuperiority, becauſe ſhe was not poſſeſſed of it;—and the ſecond was, that ſhe did exert it every moment of her life.

Portia.

Portia. Every degree of underſtanding made an ill uſe of ſeems to me (if any thing is ſo) the juſteſt object of contempt; it enables a man to find out more ſhifts and evaſions to ſupport falſehood, and conſequently becomes the higheſt inſtrument of miſchief. But when ſuch capacities are made uſe of innocently for amuſement, I think them exceedingly agreeable; I love the poſſeſſors of them the better for making a right uſe of them. For as I think no ſubject too grave, provided for *grave* we do not read *dull*; ſo I eſteem no ſubject too trifling when it is treated with good-humour and pleaſantry. Such converſations ſhould be conſidered as the play-things of maturity; and it is with great propriety that they take place of the left-off rattles and marbles. But when wit and repartee are looked on as matters of importance, and the ſerious buſineſs of a perſon's life; when men exert their capacities to make ſharp the arrows of malice, or to throw into ridicule things ſacred, and which ought to be reverenced:

I always think that it is pity the rod ſhould be left off with the marbles, and that playful idleneſs ſhould be whipt, whilſt malicious tongues throw forth their venom with impunity. It is malice alone that is the object of my averſion; and whenever I ſee rancorous malice ſhewing its odious face, I cannot help flying with horror from the company where it is cheriſhed, and looking with pleaſure into my own boſom, which I aſſiduouſly guard from the entrance of ſuch a gueſt. Thither when I retire from either peeviſh croſſneſs or malicious inventions, I am ſure to meet the delight of my ſoul, good-humour and pleaſantry. With *Ferdinand* alſo and my *Cordelia* my mind can be all joy and freedom! the conſtant harmony and good-humour ſubſiſting between them freed me from the diſagreeable apprehenſions which attend me in many families, where we are in dread that every moment of time, every ſentence that is uttered, will tear open ſome wound that is but lately healed, and will produce freſh matter on which to ground freſh quarrels. When I hear thoſe

pointed

pointed ſtrokes of the ſharpeſt ſatire, when I ſee them accompanied by the proper ſignificant looks and geſtures to fix down at whom they are meant, when ſuch hints are thrown about till the inward anger, no longer able to be contained, burſts forth into an open contention; I know not which way to look, nor can I venture to make a general obſervation, for fear that one of the combatants ſhould enliſt it in his own particular ſervice; but am at the utmoſt loſs for a proper behaviour till I can make my eſcape from ſo diſagreeable a ſcene.

SCENE IV.

Ludere quæ vellem —— permiſit ——

VIRG. Ecl.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

THE freedom and joy I have expreſſed on meeting with ſuch companions as *Ferdinand* and his ſiſter (nay as *Nicanor* alſo, when *Oliver* had not artfully filled his mind with ſome dark ſuſpicions concerning his amiable twins) is one of the moſt pleaſing reflexions I can bring into my mind: for the higheſt delight in converſation to me is, where I may fearleſly expreſs my thoughts, and be even indulged in all the luxury of talking nonſenſe with impunity.

The

The *Cry* burſt into a loud fit of laughter on *Portia*'s making uſe of the word *impunity*. They declared that they never yet had heard of any act of parliament againſt talking nonſenſe. They preſumed that thoſe people who were ſo *low*, ſo fooliſh, as to delight in nonſenſical converſation, might, with the greateſt impunity, follow the bent of their own ſilly inclinations. It would be hard indeed, they ſaid, to rob idiots of this privilege; for it could not be ſuppoſed that one would talk nonſenſe who was capable of talking any thing elſe.

At this inſtant were the teeth of the whole *Cry* again viſible to every beholder; for even the formal forgot to retain their ſolemnity of face on this occaſion: ſo warmly were they all engaged in the loud and rapturous laugh; and ſo brimful of contempt with *Portia*'s confeſſion, that ſhe loved to talk nonſenſe.

Portia. How unfortunate are you, O ye *Cry*, in proving continually by your practice the truth of my obſervations, whilſt in words you are endeavouring with all your utmoſt art and eloquence to contradict me! You now, by the moſt inconteſtable evidence, confirm my opinion, and evince, that although there is no act of parliament againſt it; yet, in your company, there is an act of criticiſm againſt the pleaſure of talking ſuch nonſenſe as I would plead for the indulgence of. I mean a liberty of uttering every innocent riſing thought, and of not being at the trouble, according to the old ſaying, of taking out all my words to look at them. To talk nonſenſe agreeably is the talent of very few; but to allow that privilege to others, without a rigid examination of every ſingle word and ſentence, is rather more rare than even the other, and is to me a very diſtinguiſhing mark of good-humour.

Men who have but few ideas, whoſe chief joy is that of ſhining in converſation, and

and pluming themſelves on their own wiſdom, muſt indeed make the moſt of their ſmall ſtock; they cannot therefore afford to ſpend any of it in what I call play and diverſion: it is a richneſs of images that enables a man to uſe either of them as play-things; and it is an exuberance of good-humour that can delight in ſuch play. The heart muſt be innocent, and have no ſiniſter plots to carry on, or there will be no leiſure or inclination for ſuch liberality of diſcourſe: there muſt be no jealouſies, no rivalſhip for wit, and fear of another's ſhining; no deſire to leſſen or degrade each other's faculties: for in all companies that are agreeable, the images muſt be ſhared as one common ſtock, in the ſame manner as in all families of love, there is no diſpute about any kind of property.

I never in the company of *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* heard an objection made to any fancy or conjecture on account of its being trifling; and yet none of the human race better ſhew the difference between a trifling conjecture and an important truth.

It

It is indeed the being capable of clearly diſtinguiſhing between them, that enables the human mind to enjoy both; and I believe to trifle and talk nonſenſe agreeably, is almoſt always accompanied with a capacity of talking ſeriouſly, with judgment and perſpicuity. And inſtead of its being true, as you juſt now ſaid, that no one ever talked nonſenſe, who could talk any thing elſe, it is a rule I believe with few exceptions, that none can talk agreeable nonſenſe, but thoſe who can talk every thing elſe. If you, O ye *Cry*, will ſtill perſiſt in throwing forth terms of contempt, as if I meant to praiſe talking fooliſhly and injudiciouſly, inſtead of trifling with an innocent freedom, enjoy your ſneers; but ſmall is the pittance of pleaſure you are contented with, whilſt you are ignorant of the immenſe delight which others enjoy, who can receive and communicate the pleaſure of what I call talking nonſenſe.

The *Cry* gave but little attention to *Portia*'s laſt words; for the idea that her con-

converſation was nothing but nonſenſe, and that all her delight was in childiſh fooleries, had puffed up their vanity to the higheſt pitch of ſelf-ſufficiency. They ſtrained all their faculties, in order to convince themſelves of their own wit and great talent for raillery; they endeavoured to confound *Portia*'s meaning, and to confuſe all her images by affected laughs, and ſneering witticiſms, and were indeed themſelves, at that inſtant, a viſible exemplification of the truth of that obſervation, that

Pride, where wit fails, ſteps in to her defence;
And fills up all the mighty void of ſenſe.

Portia. I am never anxious whether the company I fall into chuſe to be trifling or ſerious; I deſire nothing more from my companions than good-humour, and a readineſs to be pleaſed. Wit and vivacity may produce entertainment, may be the luxury of converſation; but while the neceſſary ingredients, good-nature and kindneſs of heart, are abſent, my ſoul is depreſſed,

preſſed, and I am as far from having any pleaſure as I ſhould be from being fed with painted food or carved luxuries. If, O ye *Cry*, you could but be prevailed on not to imagine wit one of the neceſſaries of life, or, baniſhing all wrath, anger, ſpite, and malevolence, would you content yourſelves without the reputation of ſenſe, parts, underſtanding, *&c.* you might then become agreeable, which is in the power of every human creature to be, and is all that I intreat of you, of *Oliver*, or any of his train.

The *Cry* would willingly have parted with whatever was moſt valuable to have been ſatisfied that they were agreeable; yet would they not take *Portia*'s method of becoming ſo. Anger was within, and anger will find its object. *Portia* was therefore accuſed by them of the higheſt arrogance, and the moſt audacious inſolence, in pretending not only to condemn them for not being agreeable, but daring to preſcribe to them in any thing.

Portia.

Portia. Juſtly might I be cenſured, not only of arrogance and inſolence, but alſo of the moſt contemptible folly, was I capable of making the leaſt reflexion on you for the want of any accompliſhment which was not in your own power to obtain. But it is for your own ſakes that I beg you, O ye *Cry*, to be agreeable. Do not invite into your breaſts ſuch evil paſſions as are, according to *Shakeſpear* in his *Winter's Tale*,

—— *Goads, thorns, nettles, tails of waſps*——

The *Cry*, conſcious of the force of *Portia*'s quotation by the pains they felt within, yet reſolutely bent on not confeſſing their folly in being thus their own tormentors, with lowering brows, with raiſed voices, and every technical mark of anger, declared that *Portia* was to them the higheſt object of contempt, and that they deſpiſed her from their very ſouls.

Portia

Portia. To your ſorrow, O ye fooliſh *Cry*, you are ſo far from deſpiſing me, that you at this inſtant ſuffer me to be of conſequence enough to alarm all theſe tumultuous paſſions in your boſoms; and the ſecret you are now labouring to conceal, is, that you are ſo unfortunate as to be filled with ſelf-contempt: for contempt, depend upon it, always begins at home. I beg, I intreat you to be truly wiſe: endeavour to deſerve your own eſteem, and you will certainly have a ſufficient ſhare of it from others. Be but ſo prudent, ſo kind, as not to deſpiſe yourſelves, and you will be no longer tormented with the fear of being ſubject to the contempt of all your acquaintance.

Portia had ſuch a mildneſs in her countenance, and generally ſuch a ſoftneſs in her manner, as induced ſuch characters as the *Cry* boldly, like the frogs in the fable, to inſult their ſovereign; for as they fear'd not from her lips any biting reply, they bounteouſly beſtow'd on her all their taunting

ing wit. But there always dwells in ſuch inſultors an abject daſtardly ſpirit, which the leaſt reſiſtance can eaſily confound: and *Portia*'s laſt words to the *Cry* were uttered with ſuch a ſpirit, and real dignity of ſuperior penetration, that, almoſt thinking they heard the dreaded voice of *Una*, they ſhrunk into themſelves, and hid their coward heads.

SCENE V.

——— Demens
Judicio vulgi, ſanus fortaſſe tuo ———
HOR.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

MELANTHA was at this time, as I thought, engaged to a young gentleman, named *Demetrius*; and, as I imagined, on the very brink of matrimony: for he had dangled long enough after her to enable her to reconcile the being in love with him, to the opinion ſhe held of her own dignity; and as I ſaw not at firſt the little wheels on which her imaginary paſſion turned, I knew not but it might be real. *De-*

Demetrius, and *Oliver*, the elder brother of *Ferdinand*, were profeſs'd friends, but made as ſtrong a contraſt as poſſible to each other. *Oliver* never moved a ſtep without the guidance of ſome prudential maxim; whilſt *Demetrius* ſet up a hearty contempt for all rules whatever, and held it the wiſeſt method to act intirely by chance. He was ſo different from *Oliver*, who thought it ſhameful ever to change his opinion, that he gloried in being called a gay fellow, who ſaid one thing one moment, and contradicted it the next: he contemn'd, he ſaid, all philoſophy, and was conſtant in his admiration of only that one ſentiment contained in the following verſes:

He who knows all that e'er the learned writ,
Knows only this, that he knows nothing yet.

Oliver and *Demetrius* reciprocally called each other friend, and frequently converſed together from a very odd reaſon, namely, this their contraſt of character; for each took

took delight to rally the other. *Oliver* exerted the whole force of his wit on the levity of *Demetrius*, who returned the compliment by what he thought the moſt lively raillery on every trifling incident in life.

The fickleneſs and inconſtancy of *Demetrius* was not, one would imagine, a very deſirable diſpoſition for a lover; yet it was this very diſpoſition which made *Melantha* perſuade herſelf that he had gained her heart. It was rather her fear of loſing him, than any delight ſhe took in his converſation, that made her deceive herſelf, and fancy that her affections were engaged; for the loſs of any lover was to her an inſupportable misfortune.

Demetrius, in ſome evenings which I had paſſed with him and *Melantha*, behaved to me with ſo much particular deference and complaiſance, that I was afraid in the wavering of his mind he wanted to become my lover. And yet I thought that would be ſomething difficult for any man, for whom

whom I had no manner of liking, to bring about: eſpecially too if he had in his compoſition vanity enough to dread being refuſed.

Inſufferable vanity and arrogance! burſt forth the *Cry*, unable longer to contain themſelves.

Portia. This behaviour of *Demetrius* frighted *Melantha* moſt exceſſively; for her chief reaſon for forcing me into her parties with *Demetrius* was, in hopes that I ſhould be entangled in the paſſion of love for her admirer, whilſt ſhe might joyfully exult in the triumph of his viſibly giving her the preference. What then muſt be the terror when ſhe perceived it likely that ſhe ſhould ſee the picture reverſed! that I ſhould be the perſon preferred, and ſhe ſhould be neglected! Yet I believe it was this very fear which firſt raiſed in her mind ſuch a ſtrange admiration of me, and ſuch an opinion of my underſtanding, that ever afterwards ſhe endeavoured to be my ſhadow, and to tread in all my ſteps.

As I had not the leaſt deſign nor deſire of robbing *Melantha* of her lover, my indifference, or rather diſlike to *Demetrius*, became pretty viſible in his eyes; and he wanted not obſervation ſo much, as not to ſee how fruitleſs any addreſs from him would prove. Thus was *Melantha* ſoon cured of her apprehenſions; but at the ſame time ſhe was cured of her love. To think of being married to a man that I ſhould not chuſe for a huſband, was dreadful to her thoughts. As her vanity therefore could not be any longer gratified by the addreſſes of *Demetrius*, the rotten foundation was ſapp'd, and down fell all her imagined affection. I perceived it falling as plain as if it had been a viſible object.

Demetrius was too careleſs to trouble himſelf much about the loſs of a miſtreſs: firſt he threw forth a few common invectives againſt the inconſtancy of women; then ſung the ſong,

That haughty Strephon *ſcorns to die,*

and

and took his final leave of *Melantha* with an air of ſatisfaction that convinced us there was no fear of his being driven to deſperation from his diſappointment.

Thus in a ſmall compaſs of time, and by the intervention merely of the opinion of another, was put an end to ſuch a reciprocal affection as had convinced both *Demetrius* and *Melantha*, that the moſt reaſonable thing they could do, would be to enter into a ſolemn and irrevocable engagement to ſpend their whole lives together. A ſtrange method of marrying this! Only becauſe two people make themſelves neceſſary to ſupport each other's vanity!

If matrimony be really beneficial to ſociety, the cuſtom that (below people of quality) married women alone are allowed any claim to place, is as uſeful a piece of policy as ever was invented. This I believe hath often weighed greatly in the ſcale, when a woman hath been ſolicited to become a wife; and the eager deſire of taking

taking place of ſome of their acquaintance, hath induced many a woman to accept of a huſband as the only expedient for that darling purpoſe. The ridicule fixed on the appellation of old maid hath, I doubt not, frightened a very large number into the bonds of wedlock: and how many are there who fancy themſelves in love with men no ways ſuited to their taſte, only from the joyful hope of triumphing over ſome other woman, by marrying the man on whom ſhe hath placed her affections!

Part of the *Cry* brighten'd up at this image of triumph, and viſibly ſhewed by their countenances that (as *Bajazet* ſays) they enjoyed it in thought.

Portia. Yet every fault or folly of which women, actuated by any of theſe motives, are guilty, is by a too general conſent immediately thrown on poor love.

What

What crime, my dear *Love*, have you committed againſt mankind, that you are perpetually loaded with ſuch unmerciful abuſe! Why are you falſely accuſed of being the promoter of every prepoſterous match, the inlet to intrigue, the procurer to all manner of debauchery! Why are you called a miſchief-maker, and the blow-coal of all quarrels between lovers! the ſtirrer of thoſe jealouſies and feuds which are the deſtruction of all harmony and peace in married families! In ſhort, why are ſuch numberleſs and heavy charges daily brought againſt you, when in my opinion, nothing in mathematics is more clearly demonſtrable than that you are abſolutely innocent of them all! Why do mankind ſhut you out of their doors, obſtinately barricade all their windows, and not ſuffer you ſo much as to peep into their houſes, yet at the ſame time cheriſh and embrace all your counterfeit ſhadows, and ſwear alſo that they give you the uppermoſt ſeat in their boſoms?

The *Cry* were now in a perplexity not uncommon to them. They were angry that *Portia* ſhould dare to exculpate *Love* from the crimes with which they thought proper to charge him. But as their briefs were not ready at hand to make good the charge, they flew to a refuge, which, in any great extremity, always ſtood them in ſtead. They fixed their thoughts on the peculiarity of *Portia*'s manner of expreſſing her ſentiments of the paſſion of love, by ſuch a ſudden addreſs to love itſelf. Then all at once, as if ſeized with horror, looking at *Portia* with a kind of compaſſion, they ſhook their heads, and cried out, *Mad—mad—very mad, indeed!*——

SCENE

SCENE VI.

Theſe, when their utmoſt venom they would ſpit,
Moſt barbarouſly tell you —— "*You're a*
"WIT."

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

ALTHO', I think, I have with truth declared that it would be difficult for any man, if I do not like him, to profeſs himſelf my lover, eſpecially if he looks with dread on being refuſed; yet, I had not been very long acquainted in *Nicanor*'s family, before *Oliver* (whom, if I know my own heart, I diſliked the moſt of all human kind) in ſome meaſure brought this about.

No one could have been more piqued at a refuſal than *Oliver*; but his vanity lifted him ſo high, that he never admitted into his thoughts the poſſibility of ſuch a miſfortune.

Oliver was generally called a handſome man; and he had indeed as much title to beauty as a good complexion and a regular ſet of features could give him: but there was ſomething ſo ſly and wicked in the look of his eyes, that it was impoſſible to meet them with any pleaſure; nor in my opinion can the fineſt ſet of teeth, or the beſt form'd mouth, attone for the envious ſneer which dwelt about his lips.

It was not, however, on his beauty that *Oliver* depended for ſucceſs in his amours, but on the force of his wiſe maxims.

He had invented and remember'd political maxims enough to have filled a large volume on the methods of gaining women hearts. The difference of their diſ-

poſitions he never conſulted; for he had read,

That women have no characters at all:

and no ſooner had he read this aſſertion than the truth of it gained in his mind an unlimited credit. For that the author of the above verſe confeſſed an exception to his own general rule, by addreſſing the poem to a lady, was an obſervation that could never enter into the head of ſuch characters as *Oliver*.

He gave alſo his full and ſerious aſſent to thoſe writers, who (generally I believe from a vein of humour) have made an analogy between a military ſiege, and the progreſs of courtſhip; and had he written the rules of addreſs, they would undoubtedly have been in all the technical terms of a warlike aſſault.

He began therefore to inveſt the fortreſs of my heart by a circumvallation of di-

ſtant bows and reſpectful looks; he then entrenched his forces in the deep caution of never uttering an unguarded word or ſyllable; his deſigns being yet covered, he played off, from ſeveral quarters, a large battery of compliments: but here he found a repulſe from the enemy, by an abſolute rejection of ſuch fulſome praiſe; and this forced him back again cloſe into his former trenches.

No further had *Oliver* advanced in his ſiege, before *Melantha*'s love for *Demetrius* fled from her mind. She was now diſengaged, and that was a ſtate in which ſhe could not long continue; her mind muſt be employed in purſuing ſome engagement, which ſhe called love, or ſhe muſt ſink into indolence, and would be unable to ſupport that intolerable burthen, her time. A common misfortune which many women labour under! She ſoon perceived *Oliver*'s intention towards me, and was miſerable till ſhe could form a hope of making him raiſe the ſiege, and ſit down with all his forces before her.

Melantha,

Melantha, added to what is called a good perſon, hath one of the ſtrongeſt recommendations to men of *Oliver*'s turn of mind that can be, namely, a very great ſelf-ſufficiency: for women, like tradeſmen, draw in the injudicious to buy their goods by the high value they themſelves ſet on them. You may ſee a picture of what I mean in almoſt every mercer's ſhop in town; where, from behind the counter, you may hear the ſounds, "Indeed, madam, it is "the fineſt piece of ſilk I ever had in my "ſhop; —— there is not ſuch another piece "to be got in the kingdom. I cut off "thirty yards this morning for the dutch-"eſs *De bon Gout*, and her grace ſtrictly "commanded me to ſave the remainder "till I heard from her again: neverthe-"leſs, now your la — ſhip has ſeen it, if "your la —— ſhip likes it, your la —— "ſhip ſhall have it. Though I would not "for the world diſobey the commands of "the dutcheſs on any account but to pleaſe "your la —— ſhip." Thus at once does he fix in her la — ſhip's mind, the high value of his ſilk, the impoſſibility of get-

ting ſuch another piece, and the approbation of the dutcheſs *De bon Gout*, whoſe taſte is in high faſhion. Her la----ſhip, from theſe conſiderations, never takes her eyes off its beauties, nor quits the ſhop till it becomes her property, firmly believing, that if ſhe leaves it, the dutcheſs *De bon Gout* will certainly have it. For one odd inſignificant circumſtance never enters into her head, namely, that if her grace the dutcheſs had really commanded the mercer to have kept it, he would on no account have parted with it to her la---ſhip. In this manner women deal with their lovers. They endeavour ſtrongly to fix in the minds of their enamorato's their own high value, and then contrive, as much as poſſible, to make them believe that they have ſo many purchaſers at hand, that the goods, if they do not make haſte, will all be gone. And I believe many a poor man by this artifice has been drawn in to purchaſe a moſt worthleſs piece of goods, which he might have had without being in ſuch a hurry.

The

The *Cry* now ſpared no abuſe which they could beſtow on *Portia* for her love of ridicule. For their parts, they did not love to hear any one turned into ridicule for only deſiring to be thought agreeable.—For, ſaid they, it was the caſe of all *wits*, a word of abuſe always ready at hand, to be ſevere and ſatirical. Their obſervations and remarks were too paltry and malicious, to deſerve an anſwer; otherwiſe *Portia* could have told them, that —— Thoſe who would plead for ridicule againſt ſacred and innocent things, and abuſe it when its edge is juſtly turned on malice or affectation, act juſt as properly as thoſe people would do, who ſhould put ſwords and other offenſive weapons into the hands of rogues and madmen, and yet deny them to the honeſt and ſober, whoſe only uſe of them would be for ſelf-defence. —— But taking no notice of their ſpiteful cabal, as ſoon as they had vented their ſpleen, and were become ſilent, ſhe proceeded with her hiſtory.

SCENE VII.

Judicio perpende, &, ſi tibi vera videtur
Dede manus: aut, ſi falſa eſt, accingere contra.
LUCRETIUS.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

Remember *Montaigne* ſays, that in the civil wars in *France* he was adviſed not to fortify his caſtle, as the beſt means of preſerving it from being beſieged and plundered. Fortifications naturally induce a belief, that there is ſomething within worth fortifying. A man who, like *Oliver*, lays a regular ſiege to a woman, if he meets with no reſiſtance, hath no triumph in a conqueſt.

conqueſt. Had my liking to *Oliver* been as great as it really was for *Ferdinand*, I am ſo bad at wearing a diſguiſe, that it would have been impoſſible for me to have raiſed this fortification; and then how would he have deſpiſed me! how would he have tyrannized and played the coxcomb!

The *Cry* now chuſing to underſtand, that what *Portia* had before ſaid of fortifications, implied a ſort of cenſure on women acting with caution, and being on their guard againſt deſigning men, wreſted a meaning from her words, which was the fartheſt from her thoughts. For they peremptorily inſiſted on her having again plainly confeſſed, that had ſhe liked any man, he might eaſily have taken the advantage of her affections, as it was not in her power to reſiſt him. From whence they fairly concluded, that her virtue was mere accident; and ſuch a triumph played and danced over all their countenances, as plainly indicated their exceſſive joy on having drawn ſuch a falſe concluſion.

But

But *Portia* was immoveable, and could not be prevailed on to believe, that her words implied any thing more than — that *Oliver*, from ſeeing a woman's affection for him, would have behaved like a coxcomb. — The *Cry*, however, uſed all the moſt perſuaſive arguments in their power, to convince her of the depth of their own penetration; for they were not wanting in loud and vehement aſſertions, thundering raps upon the table, and a univerſal babble, in which no one could be diſtinctly heard; concluding at laſt with an ironical pretended pity for the great number of poor young creatures, who (from wearing no diſguiſe like *Portia*) had fallen a ſacrifice to the deluder, man. And this no doubt, ſaid they, was owing to the ſoftneſs of their diſpoſitions, and the tenderneſs of their affections.

Portia. Notwithſtanding, O ye *Cry*, the ſharp reproaches you have caſt on thoſe unfortunate young creatures, whom you inſultingly pretend to pity, I cannot help thinking,

ing, that thoſe girls who have been deluded from the ſimplicity of their hearts, and (as you ſay) the tenderneſs of their affections, are truly the objects of compaſſion. But it is in truth the office of vanity, and not of love, to be the inward betrayer of the heart, the pander to men's artful deſigns. It is the immoderate thirſt after admiration, and a deſire of being prefer'd to ſome other woman, that opens an eaſy road for that flattery, which too often is the prevailing bribe. If in the education of young women, inſtead of pointing all our force againſt their admitting into their hearts one grain of real affection, we were to convince them, that admiration is not neceſſary to their well-being, we then might perhaps effectually guard them againſt being in the power of every man who can but once contrive to pique their vanity or pride.

The *Cry* now collected together a whole load of quotations to prove *Portia* in the wrong.

'Tis [b] pride that keeps men oft, and women too from falling.

Value yourſelves, and men deſpiſe,
You muſt be proud if you'll be wiſe.

Several other quotations did their memory furniſh them with; and they thought *Portia* could not dare to hold her own opinion againſt what they had read in ſo many different books.

Portia. The oftener pride or vanity hath been repreſented in ſo fair a light, the more pains ſhould be taken to ſtrip off the diſguiſe, and to ſhew, that it hath been improperly repreſented. I believe it may be as plainly proved from experience, that nothing really good ever came from pride, as that grapes never were gathered from thiſtles.

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[b] The reader is intreated to obſerve, that we intend not poſitively to cenſure every quotation which may happen to be put into the mouth of the *Cry*. For it is the falſe or improper applications that ſuch characters are apt to make of their reading, which we would endeavour to bring to light.

The *Cry* were in a very great paſſion that *Portia* would not allow the authority which they brought from their reading; and declared, that ſhe was the moſt perverſe, obſtinate, arrogant, ſelf-ſufficient woman, that ever yet was born.

Portia. Why, O ye *Cry*, are you ſo enraged, that pride or vanity ſhould ſtand condemned for their own faults, and ſhould not be ſuffered to hide their heads behind the borrowed names of virtue?

It might with greater propriety be ſaid, that the *Cry* felt the queſtion than that they heard it. The rage which always poſſeſſed their minds, whenever their inmoſt hearts were detected, flaſhed from their eyes. For they were conſcious, that at this time every one was ſecretly employed in thought how they might hide away the idea of pride, and metamorphoſe the very word into dignity and greatneſs of mind. They ſtood ready prepared alſo, in caſe *Portia* ſhould happen to mention the

the words modeſty and humility in their true ſenſe, to transform them into ſtupidity and meanneſs of ſpirit.

Portia. Although the world ſhould not have bribed me to have been guilty of an action which I ſhould think ſo wicked; yet I very well knew that it was in my power to have ſacrificed the chaſtity of *Melantha* to *Oliver* whenever I had pleaſed.

Cruel! uncharitable! were now the words which the *Cry* thought proper to utter.

Portia. Had I but given *Oliver* public encouragement enough to have made *Melantha* believe that he was the object of my choice; and whilſt her paſſions were all in a tumult between rage, jealouſy, and deſpair, had I drawn back enough to have raiſed his reſentment, and ſent him to her as a refuge from his diſappointment; —— what would be her joy to find, on a ſudden, the gloomy proſpect all vaniſhed! and ſhould ſhe behold my lover proſtrate at

at her feet, and with the moſt inveterate abuſe ſacrificing me at the ſhrine of her altar—what lengths would ſhe not go! or where would ſhe ſtop, if there was the leaſt danger of her again loſing ſo tranſporting a triumph!

This picture was too pleaſing to the *Cry* for them to contain their joy. They ſuddenly, and before they were aware of it, clapped their hands in token of inward raptures.

Portia. But when I repreſent what I believe would have been the conſequence had I liked *Oliver*, and had ſuch preference been viſible to his eyes, I am ſuppoſing impoſſibilities. For could his perſon or addreſs at firſt have raiſed in me a capricious liking, I am very certain that a ſhort time, and a little obſervation, would have brought a perfect cure. When a man by inſult ſhews that he deſpiſes a woman only becauſe ſhe prefers him to the reſt of mankind, the coxcombical part he plays is ſuch a tacit confeſſion of his being undeſerving her

her approbation, that I think ſhe cannot long be at a loſs in forming a right judgment of him: for if we place no boundaries to the indulgence of our capricious inclinations, if a plain diſcovery of the utmoſt unworthineſs in the object of our affections is not of ſufficient force to cure our love, we are all liable to become the prey of the loweſt and moſt abandoned of mankind.

Fine love indeed, ſaid the *Cry*, that could be ſo eaſily cured!

And fine love, thought *Portia* to herſelf, is that which cannot thus be cured, nor has any dependence on the behaviour of its object for its duration!

But now *Serina* ſtepping forward from the aſſembly, undertook to plead the cauſe of conſtant love.——*Serina*, who thought herſelf violently entangled in a paſſion for a worthleſs young fellow, who had no one good quality to recommend him. His only merit in her eyes was fixed on no other baſis

ſis than that of an indulgent father's diſ-approbation, and paternal anxiety on her account, leſt ſhe ſhould throw herſelf, and her fortune, acquired by his laborious induſtry, away upon a wretch, whoſe vices muſt neceſſarily render her miſerable. She was indeed a proper advocate for the reſolute perſiſtance in a paſſion, which if adequately expreſſed, would with much greater propriety be called obſtinacy than love. This *Serina*, not yet twenty years old, her heart filled with the image of her own meritorious conſtancy, pleaded long in defence of the merit of thus reſolutely fixing the affections, and concluded with an high admiration of the character and behaviour of *Prior*'s *Emma*.

The *Cry* were loud in their applauſes of *Serina*'s eloquence, and perfectly agreed with her in her general praiſes of conſtancy; declaring that *Portia* had no heart, no ſoul, no feeling of the tender paſſions, and was more like an inſenſible ſtock than a woman.

Portia.

Portia. If you are reſolved, O ye *Cry*, to make ſuch extravagant paſſions the objects of your admiration and imitation, it is not in my power to prevent it. But I will tell you a ſtory within my own knowledge, of a very tragical cataſtrophe which attended one of theſe unſurmountable paſſions. It happened when I was very young, for I was but ten years old, yet the impreſſion it made on my memory is not likely to be eraſed by time.

A farmer in the village where my mother then lived, had two daughters: the youngeſt they loſt when an infant in the cradle; for ſhe was ſtolen from them by a ſet of ſtrolling wretches, called gypſies: but in a twelvemonth's time the ſame crew coming again through the village, were ſtopped and forced to render back their ſmiling plunder. From hence her parents called her *Perdita*; and her recovery in ſuch an unexpected a manner ſo endeared her to them, that they might be ſaid to doat on her to

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diſtraction; and her great beauty, as ſhe grew towards being a woman, made her the admiration of the whole neigbourhood. But at ſixteen the unhappy *Perdita* gave an unbounded looſe to one of thoſe paſſions, which you, O ye *Cry*, imagine to be ſo meritorious, and in praiſe of which your *Serina* hath been ſo eloquent. From that time her thoughts wandered from her rural buſineſs, and center'd all in *Colin*, her father's ſhepherd, who, unfortunately for the enamour'd maid, chanced to have very little reſemblance to the *Arcadian* ſhepherds, either in virtue or conſtancy. *Perdita* (as is the natural conſequence of ſuch indulged paſſions) now left her cows unmilked, forgot to drive the young lambs to paſture, and, wandering herſelf like a ſtrayed ſheep, carved on every tree the name of *Colin*, admiring thoſe good qualities in her lover, which had no other exiſtence than what her own fancy had formed. But *Colin* was a treacherous inconſtant ſwain; for whilſt the amorous *Perdita* hung on his words, and gazed with fondneſs on his eyes, he took

took the advantage of her paſſions, bereaved her of her virtue, laughed at her folly, and triumphed in his conqueſt over the vanquiſhed maid: for ſuch characters are not confined to any peculiar claſs of men; nor are they to be found only in the metropolis or its environs.

Perdita could not long conceal the effects of her paſſion; for the viſible alteration of her taper ſhape was too plain a diſcovery. Her beauty had gained her ſo many lovers, that there was hardly a wealthy farmer's ſon in the country that had not vainly ſued for her love. She had refuſed all their offers by the public declaration, that ſhe was too young to think of marriage; but ſhe ſuſtained her conſtancy of mind to reject ſo much importunity (joined ſometimes with the entreaty of her parents) by the inward fixed reſolution, that of all mankind ſhe would have none but *Colin*.

As ſoon as tattling ſcandal had divulged the ſecret of *Perdita*'s misfortune through the village, the perjured faithleſs ſhepherd quitted

quitted his native home to avoid making her the only reparation in his power, and quickly fled out of the reach of all inquiry. What now was her ſituation! She was oppreſſed with ſhame, loaded with grief at *Colin*'s barbarous treatment. Her father ſternly upbraided her with being now as much his diſgrace as ſhe was before his boaſt and glory. Her mother ſometimes mixed tears with her reproaches, but often told her that ſhe was grown hateful to her ſight; and moſt bitterly would both her parents curſe her unhappy birth, and the hour in which they a ſecond time received her to their arms. Her ſiſter, who was always envious of her for her beauty, now looked on her as a fit object of her malicious jokes. And, added to all theſe heavy calamities, ſhe bore within her own boſom the ſharp ſtings of cruel ſelf-reproach. But when the time came for her to be delivered, ſhe was happily delivered of all her burthens, by ending her preſent miſery with her life. When ſhe found her death certainly approaching, ſhe begged in her laſt moments to ſee my mother, who had

had taken great notice of her, and ſhewn a fondneſs to her from her infancy: my mother went to her at her requeſt; nor ſhall I ever forget the real ſorrow I felt, nor the manner in which my mother's compaſſionate heart was moved when ſhe related the tragic ſcene.

Perdita's ſtern parents, at the viſible approach of her death, forgot their rage; the malice even in her ſiſter's breaſt was ſubſided, and they ſurrounded her bed ſhedding the tears of real ſorrow. She tenderly graſped their hands, and, in her laſt gaſp, uttered with a feeble voice theſe words: Be witneſs, worthy lady, (ſaid ſhe to my mother) of my repentance. Do you, my father and mother, forgive my follies, forget them, and let my ſhame be buried with me in the grave. May you, my deareſt ſiſter, live to be as much of a bleſſing as I have been a curſe to my once indulgent parents, and try to cheriſh me in your memory as I once was, when bleſſed with innocence.——

Here

Here *Portia* ſtopped, unable to proceed ——

The big round tear ſtood trembling in her eye,

Una's eyes alſo glitter'd with liquid dew, and dropp'd ſuch tears,

——— *as violated not her bliſs.*

The *Cry* toſs'd up their noſes in ſign of contempt, ſaid they ſaw nothing moving in the death of a low-lifed wretch, who had been the cauſe of her own miſery. They upbraided *Portia* for her compaſſion for ſuch *creatures*, and then called *Perdita* by many vulgar abuſive names which ſhall not be here repeated.

Portia. From my inmoſt ſoul I pity ſuch victims to their paſſions as the unhappy *Perdita*; but would not therefore, when like *Prior*'s *Emma* they are accidentally crowned with ſucceſs, have them ſet forth as examples fit for imitation, and be

admired as patterns of a virtuous and faithful conſtancy. I would have every action placed in its proper claſs in our eſteem, and not erroneouſly judged by its accidental conſequence.

But now *Harpaſia*, from amongſt the *Cry*, entered on the topic of faithful and conſtant love. *Harpaſia* was a widow, who had continued in that ſtate for twenty years, in all which time ſhe had been endeavouring to impoſe on herſelf the belief, that ſhe was a true pattern of conjugal fidelity to her dead huſband; but what a vexatious companion ſhe was to him whilſt living, our hiſtory ſhall not here enlarge upon. She highly valued herſelf upon not having been twice married, although ſhe had lived a life of errant coquetry with almoſt every man that came in her way; nor, if ſhe could have prevented it, would have ſuffered either maid or widow (herſelf only excepted) to have had one lover in peace. Full of levity as was her mind, and trifler as ſhe was eſteemed by all her acquaintance, *Harpaſia*, becauſe ſhe had

from

from choice (in order to carry on her ſcheme of coquetry) retained the ſtate of widowhood, deemed it her proper cue, with gravity to condemn the impertinence of young girls who ſhould talk of conſtancy: then with all the force of her rhetoric ſhe ſounded forth the praiſes of every celebrated matron both ancient and modern, which ſhe could recollect, all whoſe virtues ſhe modeſtly deſired might, by general conſent, be conferred upon herſelf.

The *Cry* now ranged themſelves in parties; and every one, according to their different ſituations, connexions or inclinations, choſe forth ſome example for their eſteem and imitation.

For the *Dramatis Perſonæ* of *Tom Thumb*, which ſays,

Doodle *in place, conſequently for the court:*
Noodle *out of place, conſequently againſt the court:*

is in reality the univerſal drama of the *Cry*.

One would repreſent the wife of *Seneca*, and grieve herſelf to death for the loſs of her huſband. Another would imitate the wife of *Brutus*, and ſwallow living coals of fire only for the apprehenſions of her huſband's danger; her fancy was ſo ſtrong, ſhe would not have patience to wait for the certainty of his death. But ſome carried this point ſo far as to work themſelves into an admiration of the *Indian* cuſtom, where living wives ſhare the fate of their huſbands dead bodies, and are burnt alive on their funeral pile. But it was very remarkable, that the unmarried part of the *Cry*, whoſe huſbands were only imaginary, were the moſt vociferous in their applauſes of this extravagant proof of conjugal affection.

Portia. To be burned alive is a moſt dreadful thing. A ſcalded finger for the inſtant affects the whole body, and is a momentary miſery. My ſoul would ſhudder at the kindling of thoſe fires which were

were deſign'd to turn me into aſhes. But what horror would ſeize my imagination on knowing, that whilſt I retained ſenſibility I ſhould be fewel on which thoſe flames would ſpend their raging force! that my ſhrieks and cries would be vainly loſt in thoſe winds which helped the riſing flames to my deſtruction! and that not one of the human ſpecies would come to my relief!

The *Cry* at this picture ſtood aghaſt. Their power of ſpeech was loſt in their aſtoniſhment: for in their admiration of the *Indian* wives being burnt with their huſbands, they had fixed their thoughts only on the poſthumous fame of thoſe women, and on the applauſe of the ſpectators for their noble reſolution. In the fancied enjoyment of ſuch airy advantages, they had buried and concealed the idea of the horrid flames with the torments they were to indure, in order to acquire the valued purchaſe of being rewarded with having it ſaid, "There died a brave woman."

The *Cry* by no means wanted imaginations, they only wanted the power of uſing them for their real amuſement or profit. They ſeldom ſuffered them to rove abroad for either, as they found them ſuch continual employment at home: for the imagination, as well as every other faculty of the mind, is incapable of travelling two ways at once. Whilſt therefore they were fancying what a fine figure they ſhould make by ſuch indelible marks of their love as following the cuſtom of the *Indian* women, they entirely forgot every other circumſtance except this deſired heroic appearance. But being all inwardly vexed at the *real figure* they were conſcious they *now* made in this their overſtrained admiration of being burnt alive with their dead huſbands, they reſolved to retrieve their error by exerciſing their common talent at abuſe; and whilſt they were ſeeking in their minds for ſome known characters of inconſtancy in women; their widow *Harpaſia* helped them to the inſtance of the *Epheſian* matron, whom they immediately loaded with every

every term of reproach they could invent, and whom they repreſented as a picture of the higheſt hypocriſy and affectation in in her apparent affliction; and conſequently they pronounced that all the love ſhe is deſcribed to have for her huſband when living, was equally pretence and affectation.

Amongſt the many terms of abuſe, which the *Cry* hoard up as their greateſt treaſure, affectation holds the foremoſt place. This, whenever they are reſolved to cenſure, without being able to anſwer the queſtion why, they inſtantly produce; and are never therefore at a loſs to unravel the moſt intricate foldings of the human heart; nor are they ever driven to the diſmal neceſſity of confeſſing their own ignorance, whilſt this word *affectation* ſtands their friend, ready to be applied, according to their own deſire, where, in reality, it is not the leaſt applicable.

Portia. If affectation means a deſire to appear what we are not, in my opinion

there never was a character to whom it was leſs applicable than to the *Epheſian* matron, although ſhe is ſo frequently named in general ſatires againſt women, for pretending immoderate grief for the loſs of their huſbands. Take the whole ſtory fairly, as it is repreſented, and ſhe acted only according to the ſimple dictates of nature.

The *Cry* now really ſharpened their attention: the univerſal judgment of mankind was ſo much with them in the cenſure they had paſſed on the *Epheſian* matron, that they were in ſome doubt whether *Portia* was not going to burleſque the ſtory, and to heighten the ſatire by irony.

Portia. The ſociety of her indulgent lord was ſaid to be the *Epheſian* lady's chief pleaſure whilſt he was living. She and her huſband are deſcribed as two of the happieſt of the human kind. She was innocent of one thought to wrong him; the married ſtate was to her a ſcene of the higheſt felicity, and her beloved huſband's

ſudden

ſudden death raiſed in her mind a torrent of unaffected ſorrow. She mourned his loſs with a violence, which when once indulged cannot well be reſtrained. But paſſions riſing to their height, and blowing where they liſt, although they cannot be ſtopped, may be turned into another channel: for we muſt make a ſtrong diſtinction between affectation and imagination, or we ſhall be greatly confuſed in our judgments of any characters that appear to act in an uncommon manner.

The *Epheſian* matron did not affect to be grieved; ſhe was really pierced with ſorrow to her inmoſt ſoul: and in this ſituation, what ſoothed and heightened her grief was the only thing grateful to her mind. Her greateſt indulgence was to follow her huſband's dead body to the grave; and ſhe really imagined that ſhe ſhould never chuſe to leave his tomb. She abhorred all food; ſhe ſought no comfort, becauſe ſhe eſteemed it to be a vain ſearch, ſincerely believing that there was now no comfort to be found. She imagined it a

pleaſure to endure cold and hunger, and did not know but ſuch a rough treatment of her body might alleviate the ſorrows of her mind. In ſuch a ſituation, it is no wonder (to thoſe who know the natural turn of human paſſions) that ſhe readily yielded to the firſt impreſſion ſhe received, that her huſband's death was not neceſſarily the death of all pleaſure. That it was poſſible for her to live and to be happy, was a moſt pleaſing diſcovery; and ſhe could not reſiſt being delighted to find ſuch a ſudden revolution in her thoughts, as a tranſition from dark deſpair to animating hope, and to change a gloomy ſepulchre for a ſecond bright hymenæal torch. I once heard a gentleman (who had pretty clearly penetrated the human heart) declare, that if he was in love with a widow, he would chuſe to court her ſitting by her huſband's tomb, and giving vent to the higheſt guſt of paſſionate lamentations. (From his good-nature, no doubt, and his delight in drying the widow's tears.) But he alſo added, that his ſucceſs would entirely depend upon her

grief

grief being real, and not affected; for to endeavour to alleviate or remove what is not to be found, would be a ridiculous as well as a fruitleſs undertaking. Where affectation is the ſource of apparent ſorrow, all endeavours to remove that ſorrow muſt be vain; for it would deſtroy its own foundation, if it once admitted the poſſibility of a cure.

The *Cry* with their uſual candor pronounced that *Portia* had been talking abſurd nonſenſe; and then with ſneering witticiſms aſked her, if in the number of her favourites ſhe did not place lady *Anne*, in *Richard the Third*, in the foremoſt rank of her eſteem? for ſhe too had changed the gloomy ſepulchre for a ſecond bright hymenæal torch.

Portia. I am not conſcious, that by any thing I have ſaid, you can juſtly call the *Epheſian* matron a favourite character of mine: or becauſe I have aſſerted her whole behaviour to be the reſult of following the bent of her inclinations, and not con-

containing one ſpark of affectation; that I do not therefore condemn whoever gives way to uncurbed violent grief, which is likely to produce the ſame effects; but leaſt of all can it be reaſonably deduced from my words, that I either eſteem or admire a character ſo truly deteſtable as that of lady *Anne* in *Richard the Third.*

The babble amongſt the *Cry* was now ſo great, that it was a conſiderable time before *Portia* could again be heard; ſome of them affirming that if ſhe excuſed the *Epheſian* matron, ſhe muſt alſo excuſe lady *Anne*; others declaring that the latter was much more pardonable than the former; and all concluding, that the characters of the two women bore ſuch an exact ſimilitude to each other, that it was impoſſible to make any diſtinction between them.

Portia. There is nothing cauſes ſo great a confuſion in our judgments, as the thus ſhuffling together characters which have

no

no reſemblance to each other: nor is there any two known characters that I remember more unlike than that of lady *Anne* and the *Epheſian* matron; and yet it is very common to hear them thus confounded. Lady *Anne*, as we take the ſtory from our poet, was actuated by nothing but a love of flattery. Her huſband's murderer therefore, by only artfully ſaying, that *her beauty was the cauſe*, could as by a magic charm transform, in her eyes, his own deformity into irreſiſtible grace, and extract all the villainy and cruelty from that fatal ſtroke, which fell'd in his bloom of youth the ſweet young prince her huſband, deſcribed in ſuch amiable colours by the pen of *Shakeſpear*. Far other motives led the *Epheſian* matron to a ſecond marriage; and the characteriſtics of the two women are in my opinion eſſentially different.

If *Portia* could indeed have ſpoke with all the eloquence of a *Demoſthenes*, the *Cry* were reſolutely bent not to underſtand the difference, between a woman's giving up the dead body of her huſband to ſave a living

living man from death, and the being flattered into marrying her huſband's murderer. If the preference alſo was to be given to either of theſe two characters, they ſtill perſiſted (for reaſons beſt known to themſelves) to confer it on lady *Anne*.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

Firſt man creates, and then he fears the elf,
Thus others cheat him not, but he himſelf—
—He hates realities and hugs the cheat,
And ſtill the only pleaſure's the deceit.

GARTH.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

MANKIND are unanimouſly agreed in the opinion, that charity begins at home; but I believe it is the only inhabitant of the human mind that ever ends where it begins, and is void of all progreſſive motion towards outward objects: for hatred, contempt, anger, and all thoſe paſ-

ſions which compoſe the *turba*, although each is (as *Shakeſpear* ſays of jealouſy) *a monſter, begot and born upon itſelf*; yet are all ſo kindly communicative as to ſpread their baleful influence to every thing around them. From hence ariſes the cruelty of tyrants, whether placed on a throne which commands the lives and properties of millions, or having their power confined only to the ſmall circle of their own domeſtics. There is another cauſe alſo for the exceſſive heights to which human tyranny and cruelty hath ſoared, namely, the reſolution of the actor to top his part; and which ſhews us that a man muſt firſt impoſe upon himſelf, and that hypocriſy, as well as contempt, anger, *&c.* often begins at home.

Never were the hearts of the *Cry* more elated by the hope of proving *Portia* guilty of uttering nonſenſe and abſurdity, than at this inſtant; for that hypocriſy begins at home, or that a man could be a hypocrite to himſelf, ſeemed to them an abſolute contradiction in terms; it being ſo generally allowed, that the very eſſence of a hy-

hypocrite is making an appearance to the world of what he is conſcious doth not paſs within his own breaſt. Her joining alſo the ideas of hypocriſy and tyranny, was to them another pleaſing proof of her having uttered a paradox which ſhe could not ſupport; and they all at once called out upon her to prove, that *Nero*, one of the cruelleſt tyrants on record, acted the hypocrite after he was ſettled on his throne. For they allow'd, that in the beginning of his reign he was guilty of affectation and hypocriſy in ſhedding tears, and ſhewing ſuch a ſeeming reluctance to the ſetting his hand to the firſt dead warrant which was brought to him to ſign, "that he wiſhed, "he ſaid, that he had never learnt to write, "rather than to be obliged to make ſuch a "uſe of his power."

Portia. I confeſs there is a ſeeming paradox in my words; but as it is a ſubject I have often conſidered, and, as *Nero* is the very character I ſhould have wiſhed that I might have brought as an exemplification of my aſſertion, I moſt humbly beg of

of *Una* that I may be permitted at leaſt to attempt the clearing up what may appear at preſent a little contradictory in my poſition.

This liberty was readily granted by *Una*, but with no rebuke to the *Cry*, as they had uttered only a general opinion, without any mixture of malevolence.

Portia. I have been told by the learned, that the original word in *Greek*, which we render hypocrite, ſignifies alſo a player: and I believe it will not be denied, that a man may play a part to deceive himſelf as well as another. *Plutarch* reports of [a] *Æſop*, the celebrated tragedian, "that whilſt he "was repreſenting on the theatre *Atreus* "deliberating the revenge of *Thyeſtes*, he "was ſo tranſported beyond himſelf in the "heat of action, that with his truncheon "he ſmote one of the ſervants haſtily croſ-"ſing the ſtage, and laid him dead upon "the place." And I have been told by Mr. *Garrick* (whoſe judgment in theſe points

[a] *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 5th, Life of *Cicero*.

points I eſteem infallible) that it is impoſſible to warm the imaginations of an audience into a belief of the truth of the repreſentation before them, unleſs the player firſt is capable of impoſing on himſelf, and of forcibly feeling all the paſſions which actuates the character he is to repreſent. If this be true, then for the acting an aſſumed part in the univerſal drama, it is neceſſary carefully to conceal the truth in ſome corner of the human heart, and to uſe all the force of fallacy, in order to envellop it in the gloomy miſt of darkneſs. And, if *Shakeſpear* is in the right in ſaying, that man is a player, hypocriſy muſt then begin at home.

The *Cry* at this time, not clearly underſtanding *Portia*'s meaning enough to be ſtruck with their uſual fear, that it would tend towards revealing any ſecret within their own boſoms which they wiſhed to conceal, were not actuated with their uſual wrath againſt her. They found no occaſion therefore for their chief orator *Dueſſa*, who always ſpoke when a favourite fallacy

was

was to be ſupported; but deputed one of the moſt reaſonable amongſt them to aſk *Portia*, whether ſhe had not confounded the hypocrite with the madman. "For, "ſaid the ſpeaker, if a man deceives him-"ſelf in the part he undertakes to act, "he is exactly in the ſame ſituation with "the bedlamite, whoſe temples are ſur-"rounded with a crown of ſtraw."

Portia. The difference between the hypocrite and the madman, in the ſenſe I have choſe to uſe the word, appears to me to be exactly the ſame as between the madman and the player: for was there no ſecret corner in the mind which concealed the truth, Bedlam I allow would be the proper place for thoſe men who aſſume any part that doth not properly belong to them. For ſtill to carry on the analogy between the hypocrite and the player, the latter, if he is not warmed into ſome degree of ſelf-deception, is ſo languid in his action, that every one can ſee through the thin diſguiſe. Such are the common race of hypocrites, whoſe painting is ſo groſs

that

that it deceives but very few; whilſt that hypocriſy which, according to *Milton*,

—— *walks unſeen, except to God alone* —

muſt have taken ſuch deep root in the heart, as to have grown up with the very man; and where the ſelf-deceit is pleaſing, and the part aſſumed is to gratify our pride, every attempt to undeceive us, and to expoſe our hypocriſy, raiſes an anger, which muſt be fatal to all within the reach of our power.

That *Nero* was any other hypocrite than that of being a player, reſolute to enter into the part he choſe to perform, I think appears not from any hiſtory. For as there is no reaſon to imagine that he was born without the ſeeds of humanity and compaſſion, his reluctance to ſign an order for the execution of a poor wretch who had never given him any particular offence, might be ſincere and unaffected. The characteriſtic of his mind was yet in its bud; and thoſe ſpreading branches of wanton cruelty,

ſpring-

ſpringing from the inſane root of a mad deſire after divinity, had not at that time entirely choaked up and ſmothered every good inclination in his heart. But when the ſhort ſtruggle of humanity even in that inſtance was paſt, it is not unlikely that the darling image of his own authority, and this firſt pleaſing proof of his having life and death in his option, was a ſtep towards that height of inhumanity to which he afterwards mounted. He had hitherto been actuated only by common vanity; the fiddler and buffoon were his choſen parts; and whilſt he remained in a private ſtation, malice and ſly cunning were the only weapons he had power to employ againſt his competitors. The exerciſe of public power againſt his ſucceſsful rivals in fiddling or buffoonery, was not topping the part his ambition prompted him to aſſume: for when the trifling vanity of ſuch contentions gave way to the more enlarged pride of mounting from the power of empire to that of divinity; then, conſcious that his rivals in omnipotency were entirely enthroned above his reach, and that

the arrows of his wrath could not aſcend to heaven, he pointed his enmity at the objects of his power, the human race, and wantoned in the height of cruelty. The would-be fidler is dangerous but to a few; the would-be god is like a general peſtilence that ravages amongſt mankind, and ſeeks by its own venom to overſpread the world with a general deſtruction.

The *Cry* now, with great outward ſolemnity (a certain indication of inward joy on the ſuppoſed diſcovery that *Portia*'s ſentiments were full of abſurdity) declared, ſhe muſt be miſtaken in imputing *Nero*'s cruelty to his pride; as he might have found an equal indulgence of that paſſion by exerciſing his power in benevolent, as in cruel actions.

Portia. If that was true, I believe the grand wheel on which cruelty and tyranny always turns, would ſtop its motion, and the human breaſt would eſcape its power. The would-be god cannot create, but if placed

placed at the head of any temporary government, he can eaſily deſtroy.

Shakeſpear makes *John a Gaunt* ſay to king *Richard* II.

Shorten my days thou canſt with ſullen ſorrow,
And pluck night from me, but not lend a morrow:
Thou canſt help Time to furrow me with age;
But ſtop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage:
Thy word is current with him for my death;
But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

Nero could with impunity wanton in the ſight of thoſe devouring flames which were kindled at his command; and whilſt the groans of his wretched victims reached his ears, he could, by the blaze of his own fires, warm his imagination into a belief that he was a god, from thus commanding deſtruction: but if he let his eyes wander but the leaſt ſtep the other way, he muſt neceſſarily every moment meet ſome glaring diſcovery of his own embecillity, and might, if he pleaſe, weep at the abſurdity of

of his own godſhip. He could not command a leaf to ſpring, nor a flower to bloſſom out of its ſeaſon, more than the pooreſt peaſant, or the loweſt vaſſal of his tyranny. If *Nero* was reſolved therefore to mimic a ſuperior power, it muſt be in doing evil, and dooming deſtruction with a breath; for all his own flattery, joined with that of his paraſites, could not force into his mind a moment's belief that he was poſſeſſed of the power of creation. This kind of prepoſterous pride of wanting to be more than man, muſt, I think, joined with power, neceſſarily produce rage and cruelty, inſtead of benevolence and love.

I have before often ſaid, that contempt begins at home; and that it ariſes from a a diſcovery of our not being able to obtain that frantic wiſh of being ſomething which God never made us, and which we cannot make ourſelves. By endeavouring therefore to hide from our own eyes the knowledge of what we really are, we are ſtriving at impoſſibilities, and nothing but our own torment can be the conſequence. Wretch-

ed is the man who deſpiſes himſelf, and this wretch was *Nero*. He wiſhed to be a god, yet, in ſpite of himſelf, was conſcious of not being poſſeſſed of divine perfection. This inward conſciouſneſs filled him with all the horrors naturally flowing from ſuch madneſs: he was diſcontented within, was cruel to himſelf; and the poor wretches, whoſe hard fate it was to be the vaſſals of his power, could expect no better treatment than he allowed himſelf.

I have been credibly informed that if a ſhip at ſea takes fire, and the flames become too violent to be quenched, although at firſt ſhe be at a great diſtance from the fleet, yet will ſhe of her own accord, and without any direction, mix amongſt the other ſhips, in order to communicate her flames, and it is with the utmoſt difficulty that ſhe can be kept off. This ſeems as if the burning ſhip was animated to ſeek a refuge from her own conſumption by the deſtruction of other objects: and if this be really a known fact, and not an idle report, we plainly trace the *word to the wiſe*,

and

and read in it the nobleſt of fables, writ by the hand of nature herſelf.

Every thing in the phyſical world, actuated by ſtated laws, is either communicative of its own qualities, or ſubmits to the general power of attraction. The human mind, and every part of intelligent nature, is exempt from theſe laws, and hath the power of cheriſhing one ſeed and ſtifling another. The mind that chuſes to nouriſh the *turba*, by a reſtleſs deſire after impoſſibilities, takes delight, like the fire-ſhip, to communicate its devouring flame to all that are ſo miſerable as to fall in its way. But this conſuming flame ariſes firſt in its own breaſt; and, let him roam where he will, ſuch a man, like the poor wounded ſtag, ſtill carries the arrow ſticking in his heart; or rather like a mad dog, enraged with his own miſery, endeavours to bite and poiſon, with his own venomous foam, every object in his reach.

Nero, whilſt in appearance he was enjoying the higheſt luxury, in that gallant

exploit of burning his native city, and playing on his harp, at the ſame time that he beheld the flames which roſe at his command, was at once performing the two parts which he had choſen, namely, the fidler and the god. Although no outward hiſſes dared proclaim the unſkilfulneſs of the muſician, nor the weakneſs of the pretended omnipotent; yet the inward hiſſes and ſtings of the *turba* within his breaſt, gave him ſuch torment as I would not feel for the command of twenty ſuch globes as this which we inhabit.

The man who makes a god of his appetite, may be cruel and revengeful on any preſent diſappointment of his pleaſure: and his rival in his miſtreſs, or any other object on which he hath fixed his deſire, may feel the effects of his utmoſt hatred.

The picture of ſuch contentions may be ſeen in the canine race. The bone being thrown amongſt them, they ſnarl, they growl, and fall into fierce battle; but the ſubject of their general quarrel being removed,

moved, they lie down quietly to ſleep by each other's ſide, forgetful of all their painful enmity. But although in the temporary rage or cruelty ariſing from ſuch motives there are many intervals of humanity, yet, in the madneſs of a man's wanting to be a god, there are no intervals, no momentary relief: for he cannot meet one of his fellow-creatures but he will be excited to vent his rage by dooming his deſtruction, if it is but for boldly daring to reſemble his godſhip. Thus a man's having eyes in his head, or a noſe in his face, may, nay muſt, to ſuch a mind be a high matter of offence.

The tyrant, who vainly ſtrives to impoſe on himſelf the belief of his own divinity, feels all the force of what the philoſopher ſaid to *Alexander* the Great; who aſked him, what a man muſt do to become a god: "That (anſwered the philo-" ſopher) which it is impoſſible for a man " to perform."

Under the mental pain of continual diſappointments, the temper naturally grows ſour and rageful. In ſuch an uneaſy ſituation, it was no wonder that *Nero* ſhould ſeek his pleaſure in the deſtructive flames, which, by the breath of his power, blazed to conſume the then metropolis of the known world. It is no matter of aſtoniſhment that *Caligula*, in the ſame tormenting ſituation, and from the ſame motives, ſhould wiſh all the *Romans* had but one neck, that he might have the pleaſure of deſtroying them at a blow. Had he added all mankind, it would ſtill have been in character; but indeed as he was a *Roman*, and an emperor of the *Romans*, it was very poſſible his idea of mankind extended not beyond the objects of his own power. With a heart thus ſwelling with pride, and graſping at divinity, *Xerxes* like a madman whipped the ſea, for daring to roll its waves, to mount its ſurges, and, heedleſs of an emperor's command, ſteadily to keep its deſtined courſe. The diſobedience of the ocean ſhewed *Xerxes*, that he could

could not do all things. There is indeed but one who can ſtill its waves and turn its courſe, and that *Xerxes* himſelf was not that one, was the galling reflexion within his mind, whilſt he was attempting with vain ſtrokes to be revenged on the unfeeling waters for preſenting him with the view of ſo hateful a truth. Had not *Xerxes* undertaken the vain labour of impoſing ſuch a fallacy on himſelf, as that his power extended beyond what is allowed to the human race; had not his hypocriſy, his endeavour of playing a part he could not perform, begun at home, he could never have been guilty of ſuch a mad ravery.

With this clue to the labyrinths of the human heart, how many latent motives of actions, which fall under our own obſervation, will be brought to light! how many well-atteſted facts in hiſtory, which, without this clue, ſeem to make the characters of men into an incongruous heap of abſurdity, will join, and be ſo many characteriſtical marks of the men of whom they are related, that we may trace their

minds without any obſtacle to bar our knowledge. In reading *Plutarch* with the ſame view with which I believe he wrote, namely, to diſcover the human heart, I doubt not but we ſhall fairly find this *word to the wiſe* to be deduced from all his writings, that hypocriſy begins at home.

But I pretend not to impoſe my opinions as abſolute truths. All I have ſaid on this clue to the diſcovery of men's characters is only conjecture; yet if we are excluded from entering this road to the knowledge of the human mind, I confeſs that I can find no other but what immediately overwhelms us in the utmoſt uncertainty and confuſion. I muſt, like the grave-digger in *Hamlet*, acknowledge that I am nonplus'd, and that

——— *by the maſs I cannot tell.*

The *Cry* were at preſent in an odd ſituation of mind. They had not attended ſufficiently to what *Portia* had been ſaying, fully to take her whole meaning. As her in-

inſtances alſo were drawn only from ſuch high ſtations as kings and emperors, they were not quite poſitive whether any thing ſhe had ſaid of hypocriſy, pride, or cruelty, could be applicable to themſelves; (for that a latent *Nero* might but too ſurely be found in many private families, was a truth which as ſhe had not declared they had not fathomed) their actuating motive, anger, therefore, not being within, their indolence was too great to attempt either contradicting *Portia*, or being at the trouble of comprehending what ſhe had propoſed.

Portia. If in comic incidents, ariſing from the peculiar bent of humour, conſiſts the chief beauties of comedy; and if the riſible in ſuch incidents ſprings from the glaring abſurdity of indulging ſome ſuch bent of the diſpoſition, then ſhall we find I believe in hiſtories, where characters are well preſerved, frequent and ſtronger inſtances of ſuch comic incidents than the higheſt human invention can produce. For it appears to me that even *Shakeſpear*'s *Falſtaff* killing the dead *Piercy*

to prove his courage, is not more calculated to raiſe a judicious laughter, than *Xerxes* whipping the ſenſeleſs ocean to prove himſelf a god. And ſo far even beneath a comic incident was the contrivance of that emperor, who drove his chariot over an high erected arch of braſs, in order to imitate *Jupiter*'s thunder, that none of the ingenious tricks of machinery, practiſed in our pantomimes, more juſtly claim to themſelves the rank of being one degree below farce.

As I love to delight myſelf with imaginary pictures, I have often formed a group of many of theſe heros together; and, in one piece, I have (by fancy) drawn *Nero* on one ſide, ſtriking the ſtrings of his harp over a ſtreet all in flames, from whence he may be ſuppoſed to have his diſcord anſwered by human ſhrieks and cries: *Xerxes*, on the other ſide, is ſtanding with his whip in his hand, and confined on a little ſpot of earth, with a human feeble arm, ſtill ſhorter than his whip, laſhing the wide expanded ocean: but in the middle of this

piece ſits the mighty maſter of the world, the famous *Macedonian* conqueror, *Alexander* ſtiled the Great (or as *Fluelin* ſays, the magnanimous, the pig, it is all the ſame thing) putting his finger in his eye like a child, and crying for imaginary conqueſts. If abſurdity be the baſis of the ridiculous, who (as *Horace* ſays) admitted to the ſight of ſuch a picture, could abſtain from laughter? *Una* ſighed. The *Cry* ſcrewed about their faces, and allowed, with a forced half laugh, that the picture was indeed a little droll; and ſome went ſo far as to ſay, that *Portia* was miſtreſs of a good deal of drollery.

Portia. Although the abſurdity is viſible, yet we might look on it in another view, wherein laughter would be very inadequate to expreſs our ſenſations. But I chuſe not to ſhew its reverſe; I would rather draw the veil: A WORD TO THE WISE IS SUFFICIENT.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

And like our heroes, much more brave than wiſe,
She conquers for the TRIUMPH, *not the prize.*

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

OLIVER's love, or rather his wanting to make a conqueſt of my affections, was truly irkſome and diſagreeable to me; and I knew alſo that the conſequence of his being entirely baffled would be an implacable hatred. There is indeed no degree of rage which will not ariſe in the boſom of ſuch a man, againſt the woman who could not return the honour of his paſſion: for a breaſt which the *turba* inhabits is at all ſeaſons, and on every trifling occaſion, ready prepared to

transform a capricious liking (by ſuch called love) into an hatred of all others the moſt inveterate and inexorable.

I ſoon perceived the drift of every word and action of *Melantha*. There was no artifice, no ſtratagem, ſhe did not make uſe of, to gain the attention and addreſs of every man with whom ſhe was in company, whilſt *Oliver* was alſo preſent. This ſhe did her utmoſt to conceal, as it was to appear the natural effects of her own ſuperior charms; nor was her deſign at preſent to gain a variety of lovers, but only to reſemble the piece of ſilk liked by the dutcheſs *De bon Gout*, in order, by the admiration of others, to gain the heart of *Oliver*. All her views were terminated in conquering the man whom ſhe imagined to be my lover; and I never formed any wiſh more ſincerely than that ſhe might ſucceed in her undertaking. Had ſhe known how much it would have rejoiced me to have been rid of *Oliver*, without raiſing his indignation, her purſuit would have been at an end; and her hopes of triumphing

umphing over me being vaniſhed, ſhe would not ſo eagerly have languiſhed for the conqueſt. But ſhe was ſo firmly poſſeſſed of the belief, that the very aſſuming the character of a lover muſt render any man agreeable, that whilſt ſhe had no ſuſpicion of liking any other perſon, ſhe had no idea of the poſſibility of my being diſpleaſed with the addreſſes of *Oliver*.

Oliver, notwithſtanding his firſt repulſe, renewed his attacks, and proceeded for ſome time regularly in his ſiege. He found indeed a pretty ſtrong fortification, but it was a natural and not an artificial defence; for my diſlike to him was unconquerable. Although he found the reſiſtance too ſtrong for his force, yet, as he had undertaken it, he would not haſtily give up his point. However, *Melantha*'s ſtratagems at laſt prevailed; yet would not *Oliver* confeſs to his own heart, that he was baffled, but with a ſeeming neglect, he impoſed on himſelf the belief that he had deſerted me as a worthleſs prize; and then he eagerly removed all his forces

forces to ſurround another town, in his opinion much more worth the taking.

Melantha made a regular defence according to art; and reſolved to make *Oliver* take the due time for perſuading her to love; yet by ſome ſeeming inadvertent ſighs, by praiſes of the happineſs of two lovers, where the affection was reciprocal, by expreſſions of her great compaſſion for thoſe poor creatures who could not long engage the addreſſes of a lover, I ſoon found that ſhe again fancied herſelf as much in love with *Oliver*, as ſhe had before imagined ſhe was with *Demetrius*.

Melantha, as I have already ſaid, looked on a lover as one of the neceſſaries of life; and ſhe could as eaſily have endured to have dreſt herſelf for a ball without a looking-glaſs, as to have undergone the fatigue of breathing without enjoying a continual fair repreſentation of herſelf by the ſoothing praiſes of ſome admirer. But what an immenſe happineſs was now her lot,

lot, whilſt ſhe enjoyed the thought that ſhe was in poſſeſſion of a mirror which, at one view, repreſented her own form in the higheſt degree of beauty; and that of mine, her acquaintance, and as ſhe called me her deareſt moſt favourite friend, but little ſhort of deformity.

The *Cry* were ſo exceſſively pleaſed with this picture, that they forgot to ſearch for methods of abuſing *Portia*.

Portia. This pleaſing mirror was *Oliver* to *Melantha*; and by theſe means for ſome time we all enjoyed ſome pleaſure, as it now fell to my ſhare, in all parties, freely to enjoy the converſation of *Ferdinand*. *Oliver* and *Melantha* were both continually throwing forth inſinuations of my being vexed and mortified; and I confeſs that I did not take any pains to root this fallacy from their minds, that I might, unobſerved, have more liberty to follow my own inclinations.

A pretty

A pretty good ſhare of art that, ſaid the *Cry*, for one who boaſts of her ſimplicity!

Portia. But my real pleaſure ſoon became too viſible: for whilſt my whole thoughts were ingroſſed by the various and pleaſing images raiſed in my mind from the converſation of *Ferdinand*, I did not (for it was not in my power) employ myſelf in inventing new methods to impoſe on *Melantha* and her lover the belief that I was really grieved for the loſs of *Oliver*.

Notwithſtanding the *Cry* had ſo lately condemned *Portia* for an artful behaviour, yet they ſcrupled not to deride her for want of common diſcretion in not being able keep her own counſel; when *Portia*, unheeding of their curriſh ſnaps, thus went on.

Portia. As ſoon therefore as the imaginary belief of my being hurt by the

the loſs of *Oliver* left *Melantha*'s mind, like an enraged conqueror it vacated not the town till it had put to the ſword all its peaceful inhabitants, till it had ravaged and laid waſte every joyous thought within her boſom.

SCENE

SCENE X.

Among unequals, what ſociety
Can ſort, what harmony or true delight?
MILTON.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

MELANTHA at the time ſhe introduced me to *Nicanor*'s family, knew no more of the real character of *Ferdinand* than if ſhe had never been acquainted with him. His humour ſoared far above her comprehenſion; and ſhe looked on him as a dull kind of a philoſopher, who minded very little beſides his books. And *Oliver*, who made it a part of his rule of life to be gallant and

and polite amongſt the ladies, was much more really ſuited to her inclinations.

The reaſon I believe why the character of ſuch a man as *Ferdinand* is often miſtaken is, that he is too eaſily known for the generality of mankind to find him out: for ſhooting beyond the mark is as certain a method of miſſing the aim, as the falling ſhort of it. It is a ſimple mind alone that can penetrate a ſingle character; and in moſt companies, the beſt maſk you can wear is always to appear barefaced. For there are ſuch numbers amongſt mankind who will not believe but the whole world is ſo much of a maſquerade that no one chuſes to appear in it without a diſguiſe, that whoever dares to ſhew his face, or rather his mind, in its own natural colours, without a maſk, will gain the credit (ſuch as it is!) of only making uſe of a more artful refinement in putting on his diſguiſe: and moſt probably every one of his acquaintance will form a different judgment of him, and each will privately rejoice in the

the thought of being alone able to trace his real character.

When I became fully acquainted with *Ferdinand*, and recollected ſome of *Melantha*'s former diſcourſe concerning him, I was very well convinced, that had ſhe been contented to have followed her natural taſte, almoſt any other man would, in her eyes, have been preferable as a lover.

If affectation could be entirely baniſhed, how few, in compariſon with the preſent ſtate of things, would be the number of prepoſterous matches! If mankind would be contented to be properly claſſed, every man and woman would chuſe the companion moſt ſuited to give them pleaſure. If it was not for the vanity of a man's declaring that he hath ſuch and ſuch acquaintance, or for the dread of what others would ſay if he had not ſuch nominal friends, who would place themſelves continually in company, where they muſt rack their brains to come in for any ſhare

of the converſation; and for the pleaſures of which ſociety they have not the leaſt taſte or reliſh! Whereas now half mankind waſte their time amongſt thoſe with whom they would leaſt chuſe to converſe, in order that the abſent may be told that they are admitted into ſuch a ſociety. And I believe it often happens that a man wilfully places himſelf where he might reaſonably be the object of his own pity, only for the gratification of thinking himſelf the object of another's envy.

Melantha, as ſoon as ſhe was thoroughly convinced that it was not *Oliver*, but *Ferdinand*, on whom my heart was truly fixed, took up the noble reſolution of ſo cloſely purſuing my ſteps, as reſolutely to make herſelf believe that *Ferdinand* alſo was the only object of her affections.

Could *Melantha*, by ſome ſuperior power, be obliged to declare honeſtly the ſecret ſprings which actuated her to fancy herſelf in love firſt with *Demetrius*, then with *Oliver*,

Oliver, and laſtly with *Ferdinand*, I could draw up for her a very true confeſſion.

The *Cry* now all roſe up in confuſion, like the pit at the play-houſe, when they reſolutely perſiſt in their *off—off—* and declared, that *Portia* ſhould not be indulged in ſuch mad raveries, nor ſuffered to go on, imagining that ſhe could dive into the ſecret ſprings which actuate the human heart. But *Una*, like *Neptune*, (as deſcribed in [b] *Virgil*) with her awful voice made the waves of their paſſions to ſubſide (or at leaſt forced them to conceal their rage;) and as it is her pleaſure to trace the moſt intricate labyrinths of the human mind, ſhe deſired *Portia* to proceed.

Portia. I will not pretend to diſcover more of *Melantha*'s heart than what may be fairly deduced from her actions. Shall I, O *Una*, relate only my own obſervations, or may I be permitted to ſuppoſe *Melantha* preſent, and ſpeaking; by which means,

[b] Virg. lib. 1.

means, in a more lively manner, I could paint all her ſenſations, and throw into action every motion of her heart?

Una. It is the ſubject matter itſelf I ſeek; and to cavil about the manner of conveying it, is trifling and unneceſſary. Take therefore that method, *Portia*, by which, in the moſt lively and intelligible manner, you can paint the real hiſtory of *Melantha*'s mind.

The *Cry*, although they were forced to ſubmit, looked full of dread, for fear what picture *Portia*, thus left at liberty, might draw, and who ſhe might, by the force of truth, reſtrain to ſit for that picture.

Portia. Now then ſuppoſe me to be *Melantha*, and ſpeaking thus.

Portia, [*in the aſſumed character of* Melantha.] I danced in company with *Demetrius* at a ball. He was then the partner of my moſt intimate friend *Iſabinda*, and was generally ſuppoſed to be her lover.

lover. I found that evening that my charms had attracted the eyes of *Demetrius*; and by the pretence of visiting my friend, I easily obtained frequent opportunities of pursuing my half-gained conquest. *Isabinda* could not pretend to cope with me in beauty; nor, as she afterwards found, in artful methods of gaining admiration. *Demetrius* was pleased to see a contention for him, and soon visibly gave me the preference. *Isabinda*, enraged at seeing her own want of power, threw forth many reproachful hints against coquetry, all bent indeed against me; then quitted her pretensions to *Demetrius*, and dropped my acquaintance.

Demetrius, by his flattery and assiduity, gained all the love I had to bestow. I knew when first I introduced *Portia* to his acquaintance, that her heart was disengaged. I thought *Demetrius* very agreeable, and I therefore expected to see her laying out all her snares to entrap my lover, as I had before done to get him from *Isabinda*, my former friend. I had too good an opi-

nion of myſelf, and at firſt too low an opinion of *Portia*, to fear experiencing the fate of *Iſabinda*. I rejoiced therefore in the approaching picture I had formed of ſeeing *Portia* in love with *Demetrius*, and *Demetrius* preferring me. In ſuch a ſituation, with what contempt could I look down on the trifling joy felt by *Cæſar* or *Pompey*, or any other hero, in the midſt of a triumph!

In the moſt compleat victory gained by a warlike hero, every ſoldier that attends his triumphal car, having before followed him in the field of battle, has a right to claim ſome ſhare in his glory; but in the victories I aim at, the glory is all my own, and to my own ſuperior charms alone am I indebted for my conqueſts. Secure as I believed myſelf of this triumph over *Portia*, I practiſed the ſpeaking many inſulting ſpeeches, ſome cloathed in the garb of pity, and others in their native colours. I intended ſoon to have thought inwardly, and perhaps repeated aloud the following lines:

If there's delight in love, 'tis when I ſee
The heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.

But alas! the image of rapture I had raiſed in my mind concerning *Portia* and *Demetrius*, was ſoon reverſed; and the whole comedy, by one unlucky circumſtance, was turned into a tragedy in my boſom: for inſtead of *Portia* liking *Demetrius*, and his preferring me, ſhe diſliked him, and he was not diſpleaſed with her. Now indeed (as the children ſay) doomſday was come! what could I do! marry the man that *Portia*, who paſſes for a woman of ſenſe, diſlikes! forbid it, pride! forbid it, vanity! yet abſolutely to part with *Demetrius*, whilſt I have no other lover to admire me, what woman of ſpirit can bear that! Well might I ſay that a tragedy was acting in my mind; for had I loſt all my relations, or been driven to the utmoſt diſtreſs, I could not have felt a deeper ſorrow. Nor could I, in this affliction, ſend to all my friends, that they might partake my grief; for the true cauſe of my tears I would not for the

world have revealed, and an apparent cauſe was not at that time to be found. My perplexity was ſo great I knew not which way to turn myſelf, nor what method to purſue, till I perceived that *Oliver* was become a lover of *Portia*'s. Now *found* was the word.——The hare was ſtarted. I forgot all my love for *Demetrius*, and had the pleaſure of diſcarding him, before he had viſibly deſerted me. I cannot ſay this hurt him quite ſo much as I wiſhed it ſhould; and at another time this thought would have grieved me enough to have induced me to the trial of bringing him back again into my chains: but now *Oliver* was my purſuit, and all other images were loſt in the rapturous thought, that *Portia*'s lover might yet become mine. I muſtered all my forces; I laid out all my ſnares; and my artifices ſucceeded ſo well, that in a ſhort time I carried my point. *Portia* was neglected, I was preferred.

Here the eyes of the *Cry* brightened up to ſuch a degree, and they were ſo charmed

ed with the very imagination of *Portia*'s being neglected, that they could hardly contain from giving a ſympathizing ſhout of joy on *Melantha*'s triumph.

Portia perceived the inward pleaſures dancing at their hearts, and thus went on.

Portia. [*In the aſſumed character of* Melantha.] Now perfectly ſecure of my triumph, it coſt me many a wakeful night in order to form proper replies to the reproaches I expected to hear from the mouth of *Portia*; and I was prepared alſo with inſulting words of compaſſion, if her vexation for her diſappointment had been vented in tears. But finding no reproaches to flow from her lips, no tears to burſt from her eyes, I hugged myſelf for ſome time on the diſcovery that ſhe was the moſt artful of womankind. Thus I received ſome pleaſure in thinking what pain *Portia* muſt undergo, not only from the loſs of her lover, but from the labour of concealing her rage and reſentment at my happineſs. This pleaſing imagination I enjoyed not

long; for truth forced itſelf into my mind (forced, I may well ſay, for never willingly did I invite ſuch a gueſt into my boſom) and it appeared but too plainly, that I had been labouring to effect what *Portia* moſt ardently wiſhed, namely, to be freed from the addreſſes of *Oliver*, and by thoſe means to be more at liberty to converſe freely with his brother *Ferdinand*.

Words of rage (as I had no one to ſpeak to) I could not utter; and on this cruel diſappointment, tears of paſſion were my only relief. *Oliver* now grew deteſtable in my eyes; and, without conſidering whether deſignedly or not, I looked on him as the cauſe of my miſery. All my love for him took the natural progreſs of ſuch love, and turned into an inveterate inward hatred. I too much dreaded his reſentment to ſhew it outwardly; but reſolved, as faſt as poſſible, to withdraw my part of that mutual love, which I a little before imagined had linked our hearts in one.

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Some time ago I would not for the univerſe have encouraged one favourable thought of any man who had not perſuaded me to love him; although I was always ready to ſpread out my ſnares, in order to induce him to ſet about ſuch a work of perſuaſion: but I now ſaw *Portia*, without any flattering addreſs, plainly preferring the converſation of *Ferdinand* to that of any other man; and, without any diſguiſe, appearing ſo pleaſed with his company, that it was eaſy to perceive her heart was not untouched with an affection for him. Shall *Portia* then, thought I, do any thing which I dare not attempt? I will ſhew the world that *Melantha* hath as much generous love to beſtow as *Portia*. *Ferdinand* ſhall have it all; and I will convince him how great a right I have to a return of his love, by the extravagances I will act to prevent his beſtowing his heart upon another. This reſolution for the inſtant gave me ſome pleaſure; but I confeſs that ever ſince I have given way to this generous paſſion, I live in a continual ter-

ror leſt any one ſhould ſuſpect that I am in love with *Ferdinand*, and that he doth not return it. I am afraid of my own contempt, afraid of the contempt of others, afraid of *Portia*'s ſucceſs, yet afraid that were my wiſhes to ſucceed I could enjoy no great happineſs with ſuch a man as *Ferdinand*: but moſt of all am I afraid that he ſhould enjoy any happineſs without me. In ſhort, I am all over frights, fears, horrors, and torments. My mind is become the ſeat of civil war, where raging tyrants by turns oppreſs me, and put to the ſword every thought of peace within my boſom.

This laſt picture of their favourite *Melantha* ſo diſpleaſed the *Cry*, that they inſiſted on it that *Portia* had falſly and maliciouſly repreſented her: but as all ſhe had been ſaying was only the reverie of a wild imagination, *Portia* was too mad, they ſaid, to know of whom or of what ſhe had been talking.

Portia declared that *Una* ſhould be her judge, from what ſhe had already related, joined to what would hereafter appear, whe-

whether the imaginary repreſentation of *Melantha*'s mind and motives to her actions might not be fully juſtified, as not exceeding the truth.

Una allowed that the repreſentation was indeed very ſtrong; but *Melantha* having, in ſo ſhort a time, fancied herſelf in love with three different men, in ſome meaſure ſeemed to juſtify the likeneſs of the mental picture.

Portia. From *Melantha* herſelf I had the account of her getting away *Demetrius* from her friend *Iſabinda*, with many pointed circumſtances, which I feared would be tedious to relate. This exploit uſed to be her favourite boaſt; and this indeed gave me at firſt the clue to *Melantha*'s character. In the beginning of our acquaintance we were both very young, being near of the ſame age, and both under ſeventeen. And very little do girls know of each others real diſpoſitions till a lover ſets the ſecret ſprings in motion, and then are the workings of the heart truly diſcovered. All

that I have ſaid of *Melantha* hath been ſtrictly gathered from her own words, although many times ſhe hath been perfectly ignorant, I believe, of the force of her own language.

Una then ſaid that the remaining part of the ſtory would undoubtedly prove, whether *Portia* was miſtaken or not in her repreſentation of *Melantha*, and it was neceſſary therefore to attend with candor.

The *Cry*, though ever ſo unwilling to wait to the end before they paſſed their final condemnation of *Portia*, were, as uſual, for the preſent awed by *Una* into ſilence.

SCENE

SCENE XI.

—— Sunt certi denique fines
Quos ultra citraque nequit conſidere rectum.
HOR.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

OLIVER in ſome time (as well as *Melantha)* was forced into the knowledge that *Ferdinand* was the only true object of my choice; and that nothing could have given me more pleaſure than being thus rid of the importunity of his paſſion. *Oliver* could not but perceive that his regular ſiege, guided by all his wiſe maxims, had made no impreſſion on me (for to perſuade me that he could be the object of my love

was

was an attempt which muſt be baffled) and this ſent him to beſet *Melantha*. There indeed he had the greateſt proſpect of ſucceſs; the garriſon was betrayed from within; but the bribe to be paid for that treachery was *Oliver*'s being my accepted lover. The bribe failed, and on the diſcovery that *Ferdinand*, and not *Oliver*, was my choice, the garriſon rallied its forces, the attack from without was vigorouſly beat off: and thus in a ſhort time was *Oliver*, in ſpite of his wiſe maxims, twice repulſed; and twice repulſed in favour of the very man in the world to whom he had the greateſt averſion: for neither the head or heart of *Ferdinand* could give him the leaſt opportunity of enjoying the thought of his own ſuperiority, nor ſuffer him with any ſhew of reaſon to cenſure or condemn his brother's conduct. This forced him on the inſupportable labor of endeavouring to find faults in *Ferdinand* for which there was no foundation: forced him, I ſay, for he never once admitted the thought that it was poſſible to let thoſe en-

endeavours alone. It was cruel in *Ferdinand* that he would not diſmiſs every innocent, and conſequently every pleaſing thought from his boſom, wiſely inviting the *turba* there to take up their habitation, in order to qualify himſelf for accepting the honour of his brother's friendſhip. But *Oliver* doubled his care to conceal from *Ferdinand* his real hatred in proportion as it increaſed in his mind: for he had not ſtudied political maxims to ſo very little purpoſe, as not to know that ſmall is the miſchief which can come from an open enemy, in compariſon of that which is perpetrated under the cloak of profeſſed friendſhip. The ſerpent muſt be admitted cloſe to the boſom before he can dart his ſtings into the heart. It is from the falſe pretences of affection that flow moſt of the evils in human life. The knowledge of this truth *Oliver* held in the higheſt admiration, and ſo far reduced it to practice, that he endeavoured by every means in his power to impoſe on *Ferdinand*; and to make him believe his

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profeſſions of kindneſs. But the *turba* being forced to hide their ſnaky heads, twiſted and wreathed themſelves round his heart, ſo as to keep him in perpetual torture. Whilſt mankind, or any part of them, act thus, *Bedlam* ought to be enlarged, and the cenſure of madneſs ſhould not be confined to one and perhaps the leaſt ſpecies of it!

The innocent *Cordelia* too added to the uneaſineſs of *Oliver*, by the preference ſhe viſibly gave *Ferdinand* in her affections; for true affection is very apt to point towards its proper object: this raiſed in his mind an inveterate hatred againſt his truly inoffenſive ſiſter; but he ſcorned to be at the trouble of profeſſing kindneſs towards her, and generally aſſumed an haughty ſuperiority, treating her as a weak ſilly girl, much below his notice. This was the view alſo in which *Melantha* at firſt conſidered her; although when ſhe found how much I was delighted with the company of *Cordelia*, ſhe would ſeldom ſuffer me to enjoy

enjoy that pleaſure without adding herſelf to the party, and this out of pretended fondneſs to her dear *Cordelia*.

Melantha, in order to follow my path, and to endeavour at appearing agreeable to this her new lover, (as in her own hopes and imagination ſhe had formed him) could not, as ſhe had hitherto done, tread the beaten road of fondneſs, jealouſies, rages, and all ſorts of paſſions; for ſhe had ſenſe enough to ſee the impoſſibility of ſucceeding by ſuch methods with *Ferdinand:* ſhe endeavoured therefore to adopt all my ſentiments, which, till her high admiration of me commenced, ſhe had always abuſed and treated with contempt.—

The *Cry* began all to be ſet in agitation; winking, nodding, toſſing their heads, ſneering, and dropping broken ſentences: but the purport of all their words and geſtures was nothing more than to ſhew *Portia*, that they had diſcovered in her an in-

inſufferable vanity in imagining that her ſentiments were worth adopting.

Portia. But this *Melantha* did ſo very aukwardly, that the ſentiments ſhe adopted fitted her as ill as borrowed robes. Beſides (as is generally the caſe with borrowed garments) by endeavouring to make them appear her own, ſhe took them in at one part and let them out at another, ſhortened them, lengthened them, and ſo transformed them, that with difficulty could the right owner claim them as her own. For example; becauſe I ſaid I ſhould not be jealous, *Melantha* declared that ſhe could never believe her own eyes, in ſeeing that a man prefered another woman before her. Becauſe I declared, that I ſhould wiſh the happineſs of the man I loved, although he made another woman his choice, and would rather exert my utmoſt power to increaſe his happineſs, than to take one grain from his felicity: *Melantha*, reſolving to ſoar above me, ſolemnly proteſted (how truly let her conſcience inform

form her) that ſhe ſhould not only wiſh the happineſs of the man ſhe loved, although he was attached to another woman; but that ſhe would endeavour by her perſuaſions to prevail with any woman he liked, to beſtow her affections on him; and if want of fortune ſtood in the way of their happineſs, *Melantha* would part, ſhe ſaid, with all her own property, without leaving herſelf a morſel of bread, in order to make them happy.

The *Cry*, who (as before obſerved) are very ſeldom inclined to beſtow applauſe, were now ſo liberal of it on this proteſtation of *Melantha*'s, that they were at a loſs to find words by which they might extol it highly enough for their own ſatisfaction. Their approbation, like wine at the miſer's feaſt, flowed very profuſely; for like the miſer, they could well afford plenty from a veſſel which they ſo ſeldom tapped. For although they were ready at all times to load *Portia*'s ſentiments with the words *refined*, *impoſſible*, &c. yet never would

would they allow the leaſt refinement or abſurdity in the prepoſterous ſentiments or actions of one of their own race, who was aukwardly and affectedly imitating generoſity and diſintereſted love.

SCENE

SCENE XII.

If a ſkilful man hear a word he will commend it, and will add to it: but as ſoon as one of no underſtanding heareth it, it diſpleaſeth him, and he caſteth it behind his back.

Ecclus. ch. xxi. ver. 15.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

SO far did *Melantha*'s fancy of being my ſhadow benefit our ſociety, that ſhe kept a much ſtronger guard than uſual over her paſſions; ſhe indulged not thoſe frequent ſallies of pettiſhneſs which we had often ſeen in her, and as much as poſſible reſtrained her very eyes from caſting

ing about malignant glances. *Ferdinand* had made no declaration of love to either of us, but I fancied he rather ſeemed in his inclination to prefer *Melantha*. [*Now a ſudden fluſh of joy ruſhed into the countenances of the* Cry.] But his behaviour was unexceptionable. I never imagined (as I have ſaid before) that my affection for him gave me any right of debarring him the privilege of choice: but notwithſtanding the appearance of his liking *Melantha*, my uncommon confidence in the judgment of *Ferdinand* induced me to believe that he loved me moſt, becauſe I much beſt deſerved his love.

The rapture of the *Cry* now roſe to ſuch a height, that they could ſcarcely contain it within any bounds. They were convulſed with the pleaſure of this farther proof of *Portia*'s vanity, and knew not which way beſt to expreſs their triumph. This is the lady, ſaid half a dozen of them together, who juſt now imputed all her neighbour's actions to vanity. [*This was really not true, but truth was the laſt thing thought*

thought of in the Cry's *accuſations againſt* Portia.] Half a dozen more aſſerted that no human being was without a large ſhare of vanity, and brought this declaration of *Portia*'s to juſtify their aſſertion. Some were reſolved to prove that a tree could bear both good and evil fruit, and their clamorous diſcourſe was continually interlarded with ſuch expreſſions as theſe—'Tis *my* opinion— for *my* part— *I* think— *I* own, *&c. &c.* and then they all ſat down at once, ſhaking their heads (a favourite motion with the *Cry*) and as if ſeized with a ſudden compaſſion for *Portia*, ſaid, 'Tis pity—'tis great pity! but we are all liable to think too well of ourſelves! vanity is a ſad thing! few of us are ſenſible of our own imperfections! we none of us are acquainted with ourſelves! we ſhould learn to know ourſelves, *Portia*, before we declare our minds free from vanity.

Portia. Mankind in general too well know themſelves, and the labour lies not in finding themſelves out, but in hiding themſelves. There is as great

a diſtinction between the poſſeſſing any knowledge, and knowing we poſſeſs it, as *Montaigne* makes between a man's believing, and only thinking that he believes. Many a perſon is like *Moliere*'s citizen, who talked proſe all his life, and yet was far advanced in years before he knew what proſe was. When *Cicero* and other philoſophers ſpeak of the difficulty of knowing ourſelves, thoſe learned and ingenious men mean, I believe, the difficulties we muſt encounter in order to reſtrain our inclinations, and command our paſſions within ſuch bounds as will enable us boldly to acknowledge to ourſelves any pravity in our own minds, without wanting to impoſe it on others for ſo much goodneſs. Thus we catch at the writings of philoſophers, and interpret the cowardice of our diſpoſitions in not daring to behold our own hearts, into a difficulty of finding out its defects. If we really know not our own hearts, it is not becauſe we cannot, but becauſe we will not attain that knowledge. Such a wilful blindneſs is indeed the darkeſt and moſt incurable; for according to

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an old *Engliſh* proverb, *Who ſo blind as thoſe that will not ſee?*

Una. That a want of underſtanding often lies in the WILL, Chriſt himſelf witneſſes, when he ſays to the ſtubborn-hearted *Jews*, who would not admit his doctrine; "Eyes have you and ſee not; "ears have you and hear not; neither *will* "ye underſtand."

The *Cry* dared not anſwer *Una*, but were enraged to their very ſouls at her approbation of *Portia*, and her ſanctifying that approbation with a text of ſcripture; an authority which they were aſhamed to acknowledge, yet afraid to contradict. For ſhould they confeſs its weight, that was, as they imagined, to confeſs the weakneſs of their own unaided reaſon, which pride forbad! and poſitively to deny its ſanction, was wading more boldly than they dared againſt the ſtrong current of cuſtom. In ſilence therefore they ſuffered *Portia* to proceed.

Portia.

Portia. Mankind will ſeldom be at the trouble to cleanſe their minds, and throw out from thence that confuſed heap of lumber which is accumulated by ſuffering every roving paſſion to bring thither what indulged inclination it pleaſes. It is, in my opinion, a much greater labor they undertake, when they employ their time in ſecreting their litter: for the old proverb is true, that *the firſt trouble is the leaſt*, and that *lazy people make themſelves moſt work.* It would be impoſſible for mankind to take ſuch pains for the hiding their trumpery, if they were not conſcious it was there. For as *Shakeſpear* ſays, "The quality of nothing hath not "ſuch need to hide itſelf."—Men keep in their minds, as well as in their houſes, a private corner, into which they are continually cramming all things diſagreeable to their ſight; endeavouring by this method to conceal their rubbiſh from their own view, as well as from that of their neighbours. In their latter attempt they ſometimes ſucceed, but in the former they

they are conſtantly baffled. It is this conſciouſneſs, this knowledge of ourſelves, that renders us ſuſpicious, captious, angry, ſpiteful.—In ſhort, innumerable is the train of evils which ariſe from the knowledge that we do not deſerve eſteem, and from the fear that we ſhall not therefore obtain it. I wiſh it was true, in the literal ſenſe of the words, that men did not know themſelves, unleſs amendment ſurely followed that knowledge. If this was true, they would not be perplexed with ſo many anxious fears, nor enraged with anger that others do not think of them as they wiſh. If men did not know themſelves, or had no private corner in their minds, which they were afraid ſhould be laid open, I believe there would be a total end of all enmity whatever: for if we had a real ſettled good opinion of our own merit, another's miſtake would neither give us pain, nor raiſe our indignation. The compliment we ſhould pay to our own judgments, would be our ſatisfaction, as it is now the ſame compliment (by which we know it is no

miſtake) that ſets all the *turba* at work in our boſoms.

Aſk the beautiful miſs—if at a maſquerade ſhe ſhould be told by any man, that he was ſure her maſk concealed an ugly face, whether ſhe would not find ſuch a pleaſure in knowing him to be miſtaken in his gueſs, as would diſarm all her anger; and whether this agreeable conſciouſneſs would not induce her to continue her diſcourſe with him in ſuch high good-humour, as would convince him as fully of his miſtake as if ſhe was even to unmaſk? But ſhould a man chance to hit the right nail on the head in ſuch an uncivil attempt to ſhew his penetration, his conviction, that he was not out in his gueſs, would be, in all probability, full as ſtrong by the behaviour of the enraged maſk, who had no beautiful face to hide. For ſtung to the quick by finding her diſguiſe of no real uſe to her, ſhe would, it is moſt likely, ſhew her reſentment by turning ſuddenly on her heel in the higheſt wrath and indignation at the impertinence of the

ſaucy

ſaucy fellow's ſuppoſition. That woman, however, at a maſquerade, who doth not on the like occaſion ſhew the reſentment above-mentioned, is, we may fairly preſume, either very handſome or very good-humoured, and contented with poſſeſſing no large ſhare of beauty.

Proverbs (ſays Mr. *Addiſon*) are formed on the univerſal conſent of mankind built on experience. The common proverb, that it is the galled horſe that winches on being touched, is a proof that the having a ſore place is neceſſary to render the being touched painful.

I believe it might eaſily be proved, that the darkeſt ignorance concerning our minds, is not productive of half the evils as is the knowledge of ourſelves, unleſs we could ſtrike at the root of the diſeaſe, and bear without pain the ſight of what we neceſſarily are; adding the trouble alſo of removing, as much as poſſible, whatever is noxious from our breaſts. But when we

toſs about the ſayings of philoſophers, and do not take care to enter into their true meaning: we only diſguiſe and cover over falſhood by the ſanction of acknowledged authority. It would, in my opinion, be an ill compliment to thoſe philoſophers, who dwell ſo ſtrongly on the difficulty of knowing ourſelves, to ſuppoſe they could have any other meaning than that the difficulty is raiſed by the perverſeneſs of our inclinations, and our want of candor to own even to ourſelves the truths which we have diſcovered, rather than from any incapacity in our natures for ſuch knowledge.

The *Cry* ſtood all this while gaping and ſtaring on each other as if they wanted to catch *Portia*'s meaning: but inſtead of preſerving the candor which ſhe had been juſt recommending, they were in reality not endeavouring to underſtand her words, but to cenſure them; not to examine her ſentiments, but to load them with abuſe. Firſt, they accuſed her of talking above their comprehenſion; in the next breath they

they denied the poſſibility of her doing ſo; then again would they aſſert that they did not underſtand her; but in the concluſion they all ſet themſelves hard at work at proving that the fault lay not in their want of candor or capacity, but in her want of meaning. In the moſt taunting language ſhe was now abuſed for her boldneſs in ſoaring ſo far out of her depth as to meddle at all with the philoſophers, whom they would inſinuate were placed in the clouds not to be looked at by any mortal, eſpecially by female eyes; and with pretended humility they talked of ſuch writings as if calculated for the peruſal of ſome other ſpecies beſides their own, who had nothing to do but to ſtand at a diſtance and admire.

Portia. Since, O ye *Cry*, you are ſo offended at my mentioning the philoſophers, I will tell you a familiar ſtory to illuſtrate my meaning.

A merchant in the city had three daughters. They had every one of them ſepa-

rate apartments; and the father of theſe girls inſiſted on it that each of them ſhould keep her own apartment in decent order.

Miſs *Betty*, the eldeſt, was a ſlut; and inſtead of making every thing clean, ſhe uſed herſelf to the lazy odious cuſtom of thruſting about what was dirty into cloſets, cupboards, holes and corners.

Miſs *Nanny*, the ſecond ſiſter, was properly a ſlattern. She had a careleſſneſs in her diſpoſition, which might be oppoſed to exact neatneſs, but not to decent cleanlineſs.

Miſs *Jenny*, the youngeſt, always kept herſelf and her apartments perfectly neat and tidy.

One day it chanced that Miſs *Betty* had ſome viſitors. As ſoon as ſhe heard them at the door ſhe was all confuſion, running here and there to fill her hiding places, and to make her rooms appear tolerably decent.

decent. She had but juſt recovered herſelf, and was ſeated with her acquaintance, when Miſs *Jenny* (wanting ſomething out of a cloſet in her ſiſter's room) came in, opened the cloſet door, and diſcovered to the gueſts ſuch a ſlut's hole as made *Betty* colour like ſcarlet, and tremble in every joint with the ſhame of ſuch a diſcovery. She had however ſo much command of herſelf as to ſay nothing for the preſent. But no ſooner were the viſitors gone, than ſhe began to abuſe her ſiſter ſo loudly and immoderately, that it was impoſſible for *Jenny* to be heard one word in her own defence. At laſt, when *Betty* was out of breath, and could talk no longer, *Jenny*, in the mildeſt terms, aſſured her that ſhe intended not any offence; ſhe humbly begged her pardon, and ſaid every thing ſhe could think of to appeaſe her ſiſter's wrath: but all in vain! for it was the diſcovery of her own trumpery which had raiſed her anger; nor could the innocence of *Jenny*'s intentions by any means be proved to a mind ſo enflamed with wrath, and ſo irritated by vexation. *Betty*, from

this time forward, took a moſt inveterate hatred to her ſiſter *Jenny*; nor ever afterwards ſaw her entering the room without looking aſcance at her, as thinking ſhe was come with a malicious intention of diſcovering more of her dirty ways.

Will any one ſay that *Betty* did not know the ſtate of her own apartments, but fancied they were quite clean when ſhe acted thus? I ſhould rather be inclined to pronounce, that it was conſciouſneſs, and not ignorance, that, on the ſight of *Jenny*, raiſed all this hurly-burly in *Betty*'s mind.

Miſs *Nanny*, whenever her ſiſters came into her apartments, and found fault with a few ſcattered things that lay about the room through careleſſneſs, was not angry, but rather obliged to them for aſſiſting her in putting her rooms in order. *Nanny* knew that there was no more to be diſcovered than what was viſible before their eyes, and therefore had neither fear nor anger in her mind at their approach.

Little

Little *Jenny*, in whoſe apartments no real fault was to be found, dreaded not the niceſt ſcrutiny; nor ſuffered any emotion from the reſtleſs inſpection of her ſiſter *Betty* into every cloſet, cupboard, aad corner of her rooms.

One day when *Deby* was ſearching about, and carrying a broom to ſweep where there was no duſt, ſhe ſtruck her ſiſter *Jenny* ſuch a blow on the head as almoſt ſtunned her; but when *Betty* aſſured her that the blow was accidental, *Jenny*'s unſuſpicious and friendly mind was ſoon appeaſed, and perfectly contented. When *Betty* had for a long time ſearched for dirt and litter, and all to no purpoſe, ſhe fell into the ſtrangeſt whim I ever heard of. She would not give credit even to her own eyes, but (thinking no doubt on the trumpery in her own apartments) inſiſted on it that 'twas utterly impoſſible for any place to be ſo clean as *Jenny*'s rooms appeared to be. She was poſitive, ſhe ſaid, that it was *Jenny*'s

more artful manner of hiding herlitter from her acquaintance, that made her paſs upon the world for a neat and decent woman.

Behind this bulwark of *Jenny*'s ſuppoſed hypocriſy and cunning did *Betty* intrench herſelf, and often would ſhe ſay, that "for "her part ſhe did not pretend to ſuch per-"fection; and ſince all mankind had dirt "in their apartments, thoſe were in her "opinion the moſt honeſt, who did not, "by hiding it quite away, impoſe upon "the world a belief that they had none."

Let no one preſume to ſay, that this was not knowing herſelf: for *Betty* was conſcious of the falſehood of her aſſertion, and was thoroughly convinced that *Jenny* had really no dirt or diſorder in her apartments. *Betty* ſaid this becauſe ſhe had an inclination to ſay it, and that very inclination aroſe from a knowledge of its falſehood.

Betty is the man who inviting the *turba*, cultivating every degree of evil in his mind, conſcious of his own turpitude, lives a life

a life of horror for fear of being diſcovered, and therefore ſuſpects and hates every one around him.

Nanny is the man, who through careleſſneſs and love of pleaſure is guilty of faults, but doth not love nor cheriſh them.

Jenny is the man, who cheriſhing the *dextra* with a true chriſtian ſpirit, keeps his conſcience clear, and his heart free from one malicious thought; who barricades his breaſt againſt the *turba*, and with watchful care prevents their moſt diſtant approach.

The *Cry* now changed their inclination of cenſuring *Portia* for meddling with the philoſophers, into a deſire of abuſing her for talking ſuch low and indelicate ſtuff: but recollecting that ſhe had opened to them a door for the admiration of their own wiſdom, in extracting a meaning from the moſt trifling tale; unheeding of her own general and philoſophic explanation of her ſtory, they each began narrowly to

app

apply the characters of miſs *Nanny* and miſs *Betty* to ſome one or other of their own female acquaintance: but as to the character of *Jenny*, they denied it to have any exiſtence in nature.

Portia. You have ſhewn me, O ye *Cry*, that beſides the *word to the vulgar*, and the *word to the wiſe*, which may be found in all good fables, there is alſo a *word to the malicious:* for no other name can be given to ſuch a narrow application as you have made of the merchant's daughters. But to extract private libels from public ſatire hath ever been the office of malevolence and folly.

The *Cry*, exceſſively nettled at *Portia*'s laſt obſervation, declared it as their opinion, that all ſhe had ever ſaid of the *word to the wiſe* was ſtark nonſenſe, and uttered with a vain deſire of ſetting off her own wiſdom.

Portia. If any thing I have advanced can give the leaſt offence, or bear the interpretation

terpretation you now insinuate, I will gladly change the *word to the wise* into the *word to the learner*, it being I confess in one respect a much properer phrase: for whoever is above receiving instruction couched in fables, as a learner, will never be the wiser for all the knowledge and learning that is extant under the sun. For although the learners may become the wise, yet must the wilful always remain in their ignorance.

S. C. E. N. E.

SCENE. XIII.

To think well of ourſelves, if we deſerve it, is a luſtre to us. BEAUM. & FLETCHER.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

THE *Cry* were ſo enraged at finding all their attempts to confuſe and confound *Portia*'s ſentiments baffled, and their own malevolence detected, that they could not bear the ſight. Suddenly therefore they turned their eyes another way; they recollected *Portia*'s ſaying, that ſhe thought herſelf more deſerving than *Melantha* of the love of *Ferdinand*; they ſtill hugged cloſe the idea of her inſufferable vanity; cenſured her for having amuſed them with a heap of contradictions,

tradictions, and then concluded with a repetition of their new diſcovery, namely, that vanity is the only actuating motive in the human mind; by which, had they ſpoke plainly, they intended to confine their meaning to the mind of *Portia* only.

Portia. I do not perceive in what manner my ſaying, that I think I deſerve the love of *Ferdinand* better than *Melantha*, can poſſibly prove me poſſeſſed of ſo large a ſhare of vanity as you, O ye *Cry*, are ready to lay to my charge. But ſuppoſing me ever ſo vain, your concluſion that vanity is the only actuating motive to the human mind, doth not appear to me naturally to follow. If my faults were as innumerable as the ſands of the ſea; if I have not one virtue, but on the contrary am poſſeſſed of every vice in the catalogue; truth will nevertheleſs ſteadily keep her own place; and as far as my judgment goes, I will always bear her teſtimony, and not by any hocus pocus tricks endeavour to turn vice into virtue,

or

or fallacy into truth. 'Tis this deſire of bending all things to our own purpoſes, which turns them into confuſion, and is the chief ſource of every error in our lives.

I ſay, I depended on the judgment of *Ferdinand* to diſtinguiſh between me and *Melantha*, who beſt deſerved his love. Nor do I think there is more vanity in doing juſtice to ones ſelf, than doing juſtice to another. I was truly ſenſible of the real merit of *Ferdinand*; and from being able to diſtinguiſh his true character, I eſteemed him above all mankind. My own natural taſte induced me to like him, and from the kindneſs and innocence of his behaviour, I loved him with the utmoſt warmth of gratitude. His happineſs (as I have repeatedly ſaid) was the ſtrongeſt and moſt forcible wiſh of my ſoul: and altho' in his purſuit of happineſs I had been forced to loſe ſo great a pleaſure as the enjoyment of his company, had he attained his purſuit, my firſt wiſh muſt have been gratified. Were we ſeparated never

to meet again by the diſtance of a thouſand miles, yet muſt the hearing of his proſperity give me the moſt ſenſible pleaſure; [*now the word* impoſſible *re-echo'd through the aſſembly*] whilſt to have his company at the expence of knowing that I was a burthen to him, or in any way the cauſe of his uneaſineſs; was he to conceal the truth as much as poſſible, and inſtead of upbraiding me to make it his buſineſs to indulge and gratify me, yet ſhould I be very miſerable and unhappy.

Now the *Cry*, unable longer to contain themſelves, threw forth a loud affirmation, that what *Portia* deſcribed was not in nature; that it was all refined nonſenſe, and that no human being ever yet had ſuch a way of thinking.

Portia. How eaſily ſhould I have gained credit in relating what paſſed within my own mind, had not you, O ye *Cry*, known yourſelves, and found in your own hearts the impoſſibility of thinking or acting in the ſame manner. But with all the ridicule

ridicule you attempt to throw on my words, you only prove to me that, in ſpite of your inclinations to the contrary, you in fact admire what you pretend to deſpiſe.

Portia could never ſay any thing more certain of raiſing all the *turba* in the minds of the *Cry*, than by thus repeatedly informing them that their hearts were no more concealed from others than from themſelves. In the height of their rage they uſed many expreſſions to prove her in the wrong, which (as is commonly the caſe with indulged paſſions) clearly proved her to be in the right.

Portia. For all what I have ſaid ſeems ſo incredible to your ears, yet doth it amount to no more than a plain confeſſion, that with an honeſt ſimplicity of heart I really loved *Ferdinand*; and what I have deſcribed of myſelf is but a deſcription of the natural progreſs of true love in the mind. Whenever any paſſion, to which the name of love is given, wanders into another

another road, 'tis my unalterable opinion that the name is falſely given. LOVE diſclaims its acquaintance, and PRIDE or DESIRE, or both, walking hand in hand, may juſtly claim it as all their own.

Melantha's eſteem for *Ferdinand* was built on that tottering foundation, the opinion of others: her love for him was confined within the ſelfiſh narrow bounds of wiſhing to make him the inſtrument of her own pleaſures: her liking to him at the moſt went no farther than an accidental deſire, raiſed by the general law of attraction, and caught in the road of endeavouring to gratify her vanity: therefore plainly ſeeing all this, I could not but think that in the balance I beſt deſerved the love of *Ferdinand*. Yet at that very time (load them, O ye *Cry*, with refinement as much as you pleaſe) theſe were my real thoughts, and theſe ſort of reflexions ſometimes paſſed in my mind.

I think myſelf, 'tis true, in ſome meaſure deſerving the love of *Ferdinand*: but in

in the end ſhould he on reflexion prefer *Melantha*, ſo unbounded is my confidence in his judgment, that I ſhall be dubious of myſelf. And altho' I am certain that I am not miſtaken in what paſſes in my own breaſt concerning him, yet I ſhall ſuſpect that I have fallen into a common error, and have ſuffered my own paſſions to drive me headlong on to miſtake *Melantha*. [*Now we are affectedly humbled, ſaid the* Cry.] But when I examine myſelf, and reflect that *Ferdinand* of all mankind is my fixed choice, that altho' the whole world was to be ſo blinded as to imagine him an idiot, yet would my opinion be as a rock immoveable: [*ſelf-conceit and ſtubbornneſs were uppermoſt in the thoughts of the* Cry] that altho' diſtreſs of every kind, poverty, and its almoſt conſtant attendant contempt, was to take ever ſo ſtrong hold of him; yet would I chuſe to ſhare his diſtreſs, and aſſiduouſly to uſe my utmoſt endeavours to lighten his misfortunes, rather than to be placed by any other on the higheſt ſummit of human grandeur and glory.

glory.—When on the other hand I think, nay am certain, unleſs the ſtrongeſt prejudice blinds my eyes, that any one man amongſt ten thouſand (provided her beſt friend was her rival) would pleaſe *Melantha* full as well; and that if *Ferdinand* was to loſe the reputation of his underſtanding, her love would inſtantly vaniſh; that ſhe would not chuſe to ſhare his misfortunes, but with the contempt of the reſt of the world, he muſt unavoidably experience that of *Melantha*. I confeſs when I made this compariſon, and yet fancied that *Ferdinand* in his heart preferred *Melantha*, a refractory notion ſometimes attempted to ariſe in my mind, implying, "'tis a little hard;" and this notion I could not help accompanying with a ſigh: but as ſoon as I had the power of reflexion, knowing that the mind is not in a proper diſpoſition whilſt it is inclined to imagine itſelf dealt hardly with, I always took this notion by the head and ſhoulders, and with my utmoſt reſolution caſt it out as matter of offence.

The

The *Cry* now began to play over all their poſtures, and to ſignify to each other a new diſcovery juſt come to their knowledge; and this was no other than that *Portia*'s laſt words amounted to an abſolute contradiction of all her former ſentiments concerning love: for they proved perfectly to their own ſatisfaction, that *Portia* had by implication fully informed them that ſhe was poſſeſſed at that time with a raging jealouſy againſt *Melantha*; that ſhe felt the ſharpeſt indignation againſt *Ferdinand* for daring to think himſelf at liberty to like whom he pleaſed; and, in ſhort, that all thoſe paſſions to which *Portia* had a little before ſo reſolutely refuſed to give the name of love, had taken full poſſeſſion of her whole ſoul. They made uſe of their wonted arguments, ſuch as clamor, ſneers, *&c.* not to convince *Portia*, but to juſtify, as they fancied, their ſeveral accuſations which they knew really to be falſe; and it was that knowledge which induced the bitterneſs of their anger in ſuch their accuſations.

Portia.

Portia. An intruding notion, which was carefully watched in its firſt riſe, which was immediately as well as reſolutely thrown out, although the love of *Ferdinand* was in the balance, and which produced alſo nothing more than a riſing ſigh, preſſed back to my own boſom, hath no more real likeneſs to raging jealouſy and frantic fury, than have thoſe turbulent paſſions to true and gentle love. But once reſolved, O ye *Cry*, to chain down truth on the ſide of your own inclinations, with what an unlimited faith do ye give credit to the moſt glaring abſurdities, and the moſt abſolute contradictions! Oh that you had never known, no not even had the leaſt ſuſpicion of yourſelves! that you had really believed yourſelves poſſeſſed of all goodneſs and wiſdom! How much inveterate malice would then be ſpared, and what an immenſe way would it go in driving the tormenting *turba* from your boſoms! How greatly, O ignorance, art thou to be preferred before every degree of knowledge, ſhort of that real wiſdom which teaches us

to

to amend our faults, or to bear with patience and humility thoſe defects which are not within our power to remove.

This was ſo like a former rebuke of *Partia*'s, by which the audacious *Cry* were before abaſhed, that they endeavoured to turn the diſcourſe, by calling on her for a farther account of *Melantha*, whom ſecretly in their hearts they all approved, as being (as they were now convinced) one of their own ſociety.

SCENE

SCENE XIV.

Man is to man a monſter-hearted ſtone:
With heav'n there's mercy, but with man
there's none. Old Play.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

WHENEVER *Melantha* imagined that *Ferdinand* paid her any deference, or preferred her in his regard, ſhe had ſo many ſly contrivances to throw forth the inſolence of her heart, that I fancy ſhe muſt have lived without ſleep in order to have invented them: yet had ſhe a difficult part to act, as that inſolence was to be viſible only to me, and totally hid from the of *Ferdinand.*

This labor of acting a double part is a ſtrange choice for any one to make! It is like carrying a dark lantern, and keeping the thoughts continually on the watch for fear of making a miſtake, and, by turning the wrong ſide, of expoſing their own countenances, which they deſire to keep hid. This double part alſo is generally undertaken for the ſame purpoſe as the dark lantern is carried; to perpetrate ſome miſchievous intent.

But *Melantha* was baffled in her deſign of becoming the object of my envy; for I knew her character; and that ſhe ſhould act conformable to it was neither matter of my wonder or vexation. It was the behaviour of *Ferdinand* alone that was capable in the leaſt degree of influencing my mind. Inſolence I was certain could not take root in his heart; it was not the proper ſoil to produce ſuch weeds. I think, as *Deſdemona* ſays, *the ſun where he was born drew all ſuch humours from him.* Had he even dropped any expreſſion which, at firſt ſight,

ſight, I might have conſtrued into inſo-ſolence, I ſhould have blamed myſelf for ſuch a conſtruction, and ſhould carefully have ſearched my own heart for the cauſe of ſuch an error. I ſhould have arraigned ſome indulged inclination of perverting my judgment: I ſhould have endeavoured firſt to have diſcovered, and then to have driven it from my boſom.

The *Cry*, conſcious that they had never imputed any miſtake to their own inclinations; that they had never ſearched their own hearts for any error, and therefore had never found the only place where it lay hid; were very angry with *Portia* for pretending to aſſert, that ſhe had ever exerted reſolution enough to ſtand ſuch a ſelf-examination. Then, for *my* part, and, *I* do not pretend, *&c. &c.* were re-echoed through the aſſembly: and all thoſe ſentences which begin with "for *my* part *I* "don't," always imply "for *your* part "*you* do." At laſt the *Cry*, from this account of *Portia*'s impartial examination of her own mind, jumbled up a very odd ac-

cuſation; for dropping what ſhe laſt ſaid of herſelf, they dwelt on the confidence ſhe had placed in *Ferdinand*; nodded, winked, and exulted in the diſcovery that ſhe was the moſt partial creature breathing. It was no wonder, they ſaid, for a woman, actuated ſo ſtrongly by partiality as *Portia* was, to dwell on the great eſteem ſhe had for the man ſhe liked. It was acting juſt like all the reſt in the world. They could not make her the compliment of thinking ſhe had, in this inſtance, any ſuperiority over the reſt of her ſex. They were too ſincere to flatter her in ſuch a manner. Then was the word *partiality* again toſſed about from one to the other; and the whole *Cry* were unanimous in their opinion, that *Portia* ſtood fully convicted of it to the higheſt degree.

Portia thought to herſelf that the word *partiality* had no more to do with what ſhe had been ſaying, than the word *hobnob*: but to convince the *Cry* that any thing they pleaſe to ſay is not perfectly to the purpoſe, was a taſk which ſhe knew would be

in

in vain,; ſhe aſked them therefore what idea they had really annexed to the word *partiality*.

The *Cry* were ſome time before they gave any anſwer to this queſtion; at laſt they produced ſo many, that to enumerate them would be endleſs: but the ſum and ſubſtance of all the meaning that could be extracted from half an hour's babble was, that partiality was ſomething very bad, and they reſolutely perſiſted that *Portia* was guilty of it.

Portia. Without going farther for an explanation of the word than the common acceptation of it, partiality means a willingneſs to juſtify rather than condemn the words or actions of any perſon for whom we have conceived an affection. If this affection ſhould be built on the foundation of capricious liking, then is our partiality towards that perſon an injudicious approbation.

This is not all, ſaid *Clodio* from the *Cry*; for partiality will approve in one perſon the very ſame actions which it condemns in another.

Portia. Unleſs the inducement to ſuch approbation can be proved to be an ill-grounded eſteem, obtained from us by flattery, I ſee nothing ſo abſurd in ſuch a favourable conſtruction of ſome men's words and actions. For on due conſideration we ſhall find it I believe true, that ſome perſons have a right to our partiality: or rather, from the uniform innocence that runs through their converſation, they have a right to claim it as a piece of juſtice at our hands, that we ſhould interpret in their favour any little accidental appearance of a contradiction in their behaviour, or in their ſentiments. This, inſtead of being a blameable partiality, ought to be called a right-placed confidence, and is nothing more than common charity of mind.

" Now we are all benevolence and cha-
"-rity, ſaid the *Cry*; but when we mention
" *Oliver* and *Melantha*, we can ſhew our
" prejudice as plainly as we can our
" partiality, when we chuſe to be laviſh of
" our praiſes on our favourites *Cordelia* and
" *Ferdinand*."

Portia. Can it juſtly be called partiality not to yield our belief without the ſtrongeſt proofs that a peach-tree will not produce four crabs? or is it prejudice againſt the poor crab-tree not to expect from it the melting peach? And yet the not yielding our aſſent to the poſſibility of a peach-tree's bearing crabs, might, with full as much propriety, be termed partiality, as the unbounded confidence I have expreſſed towards the innocent and well-regulated minds of *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia*. If with juſtice alſo we might apply the word *prejudice* to any one's perſiſting in the belief that peaches are not produced by crab-trees, then with equal juſtice muſt

I ſtand condemned of prejudice for pronouncing, that the language of *Oliver* and *Melantha* (however they may endeavour to diſguiſe their thoughts) muſt be the genuine fruit of the *turba*, which are crawling and twiſting themſelves about their wretched hearts. The true diſtinction between that capricious partiality, which is the reſult of wrong judgment, and that tendency towards approving, nay ſometimes excuſing our friends, whom long-tried experience hath endear'd to us, is to me ſo plain, that I ſhould have ſaid very little on the ſubject, did I not daily perceive that the great dread of appearing partial, and the general outcry for impartiality, hath opened a field for mankind to give a looſe to every degree of harſhneſs in their diſpoſitions, and, under the pretence of juſtice, to ſuppreſs with an iron hand every inlet to mercy. This great love of impartiality ſometimes goes ſo far as not to ſuffer men's failings to reſt with them in their graves, and urges us on to the tearing open the wounds of our dead friends, and,

as

as Mr. *Addiſon* ſays, *expoſing them to public view:* but by this renting and tearing them open (to continue the metaphor) they muſt neceſſarily be enlarged, and often to a little ſcar is given the appearance of a ghaſtly wound. In a rigid, or call it an impartial examination, into the merits of the living, it may be ſuppoſed that the amendment of the perſon is deſigned by ſuch rough phyſic; but the pretence of probing the wounds of the dead, in order to heal them, is by death rendered impoſſible. Where then can be the utility or inducement to ſuch impartial juſtice? I am afraid the inducement is found in the ſecurity ariſing from the common ſaying, *that dead dogs,*——&c. (the proverb, as *Hamlet* ſays, is ſomething muſty) and the utility in the raiſing our own fame on the mangled reputations of our dead friends.

The *Cry*, although they were not fond of agreeing with *Portia*, were ſtruck with ſuch a reverential awe for themſelves whenever

ever they ſhould be dead, that they did not contradict her ſentiments on this head: but they carried their compaſſion for the dead to ſuch an extreme, as plainly ſhewed they had none to ſpare for any human creature living.

SCENE

SCENE XV.

Fictis jocari nos meminerit fabulis.

PHÆDRUS.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

IN ſpite of all the pains *Melantha* took in acting her double part, and carrying her dark lantern ſteady, it often turned its light upon herſelf, and gave me ſo full a view of her, as to enable me with certainty, I believe, to draw her picture. From a woman's behaviour to her lover and her friends around her, it is no difficult taſk to deſcribe every ſtep ſhe would take on being married to the man whom ſhe believes to be the choice

of

of another. And if I may be permitted once more to aſſume the character of *Melantha*, I will endeavour fairly to exhibit the life which her imagination muſt have formed in being the wife of *Ferdinand*.

The *Cry* were not ſo averſe to this propoſal of *Portia*'s, as from their averſion to all her imaginary flights of fancy might have been expected: they had a faint remembrance, that in *Portia*'s laſt repreſentation of *Melantha*, it turned out to her own mortification; and deſirous of once more enjoying ſuch pleaſing ſounds, they, with ready acquieſcence, intreated her to tell them in what manner the happy *Melantha* enjoyed herſelf when ſhe was married to *Ferdinand*.

Portia. Whether in reality *Melantha* ever enjoyed that ſuperior lot, is not at preſent my purpoſe to declare: but at the time when ſhe had made herſelf believe that it was her higheſt wiſh to become the wife of *Ferdinand*, while ſhe was labouring under ſome apprehenſions leſt I ſhould be the

the object of his choice, and yet from his complacency of temper had gathered hopes enough to form a distant prospect of success. These were the thoughts which I doubt not sometimes passed within her bosom. "Oh that I could but once make "*Ferdinand* fully declare himself my lover, "to free me from those dreadful appre- "hensions which I confess I sometimes "have, that *Portia* is more agreeable to "him than myself! For fear of losing my "desired prize, I would soon fix him in "the marriage chains; but I would so far "conceal my inward triumph over *Portia*, "the neglected *Portia*, that I would more "assiduously than ever seek her conversa- "tion, and force myself into her friend- "ship. I would intreat her company to "church on the solemn day of our mar- "riage; I would engage her not to re- "fuse me, by urging to her her own decla- "rations of the pleasure she always took "in beholding her friend's happiness. I "would insist upon her going with us to "make some stay at our pleasant country- "house, which I intend *Ferdinand* shall

"take

" take for me on my wedding. Her de-
" light in his company and converſation
" would induce her to accept my offer;
" for I have often heard the mean-ſpirited
" creature declare, that if ſhe loved any
" man (and I know ſhe loves *Ferdinand*)
" there was no conjuration in his being
" married to another, which could baniſh
" ſuch love from her mind. Oh heavens!
" what an unaccountable young woman
" is *Portia*! I am ſure was ſhe to be mar-
" ried to *Ferdinand*, all my love to him
" would vaniſh with a vengeance, as I
" may ſay; for nothing leſs than ven-
" geance could appeaſe the torments of
" my breaſt. Daggers or poiſon would
" be my only wiſh; nor could toads or
" adders be more loathſome to my ſight,
" than would be *Portia* if ſhe was the
" wife of *Ferdinand*. —— But avaunt thou
" tormenting picture, and let me again
" ſuppoſe myſelf the happy woman. ——
" Having prevailed with *Portia* to accom-
" pany us to our country-houſe at —— as
" ſoon as we were ſettled I would give out
" that I ſaw company, and this village

" being

" being remarkable for the number of
" genteel families who live there, as well
" as for their great politeneſs to ſtrangers, I
" ſhould not want ſpectators and admirers
" of my wedding cloaths, the neatneſs of
" my furniture, the richneſs of my plate,
" and the elegance of my fancy in china,
" ſhells, *&c.* But my chief joy would not
" be in ſhewing off thoſe trifling things
" which money can give any one poſſeſ-
" ſion of, but in ſhewing off *my* huſband.
" When at table with other learned men,
" *Ferdinand* talked as learnedly as they, I
" would frequently interrupt him with
" *my dear* and *my love*; ſo as not to let
" the company one minute forget, that
" the man who uttered ſuch good ſenſe
" was *my* huſband. Yet all this good
" ſenſe in *my* huſband, I muſt contrive by
" ſome trick or other to have transferred
" to *myſelf*. This I would effect by watch-
" ing narrowly after ſome peculiarity in
" my huſband's temper; which being
" once found, I would make ſuch a buſtle
" about complying with it before com-
" pany, that they ſhould always go away

" ſatisfied with the notion of my ſuperior
" underſtanding, which could thus con-
" deſcend to humour a man in his un-
" accountable whims. *Ferdinand*'s open-
" neſs of temper and generoſity of mind,
" would make him conceal nothing from
" me; and I ſhould every day find ſome-
" thing new to work upon, whilſt he
" ſhould know no more of me than I
" thought proper; nor would I fail to
" have ſome hidden, as well as ſome
" apparent view in all my actions. I
" would leave no methods untried to re-
" tain *Portia* ſtill in our family, as a con-
" ſtant witneſs of my triumph. She
" would perhaps ſoon ſee through all my
" tricks, and find me out; but this I
" would by no means endeavour to pre-
" vent, as I know that nothing could
" afflict her more, than to ſee her belov-
" ed *Ferdinand* dealt with thus treache-
" rouſly. I ſhould then have the inward
" ſatisfaction to know, that *Portia* with
" a moſt poignant regret would ſecretly
" think, *O that I had been happy enough to*
" *have pleaſed* Ferdinand! *how differently*

" *would*

" *would I have acted towards him!* But " whatever *Portia* might think or ſee, ſhe " muſt not dare to ſay the leaſt word to " *Ferdinand:* for if ſhe ſhould, what a " clamor would I ſoon raiſe againſt her as " a miſchief-maker! How would I extol in " the higheſt terms my own civility to " her! How would I brand her with the " names of treacherous and ungrateful! I " would load her with the accuſation of " making a breach between me and my " lawful huſband. I would contrive that " the whole world ſhould believe that her " deſign was to allure *Ferdinand* from his " virtuous wife. Then would *Portia*'s in- " famy be the conſequence; and I ſhould " enjoy all the raptures of the higheſt " revenge."

The minds of the *Cry* now all ſympathized ſo ſtrongly with the raptures of *Melantha* for this compleat triumph over *Portia*, that they could admit no other image. They fairly forgot in whoſe perſon *Portia* had been ſpeaking; they imagined *Melantha* preſent before their eyes. They declared

clared that it was ever their opinion, that *Portia* would at laſt come to the higheſt diſgrace. They pityed poor *Melantha* for entertaining ſuch a treacherous gueſt, and abuſed *Portia* as if ſhe was abſent in the moſt virulent terms they could invent.

Portia at firſt was a little ſtartled, and could not directly comprehend their meaning. But *Una* ſaid—Don't you perceive, *Portia*, that the *Cry* have all drank of the *Circean* cup; they are intoxicated by the pleaſure of ſuppoſing it poſſible for *Melantha* to have the power of treating you in ſuch a manner. They are ſo drunk with their own inclinations, that they have literally loſt their ſenſes, and are metaphorically all ſtanding upon their heads.

Portia plainly ſaw their transformation; but ſhe took no other method of reducing them again into their natural forms, than thus to continue her diſcourſe.

Portia. Theſe, from the knowledge I have of *Melantha*'s mind, were ſometimes her

her pleaſing hopes; but like the poor man in the *Spectator*, ſhe found her baſket overturned; and all her imaginary joys vaniſhed by the obtruding thought, that perhaps *Ferdinand* might be able to look through all her deſigns, and prevent all her endeavours of impoſing on him; and 'twas poſſible beſides, that ſhe might never be his wife. This thought awakened the *Cry* alſo from their pleaſing dream. They hated the light, and wiſhed like *Nell* in the farce, that they could have dreamt for ever. They recollected their own fantaſtic behaviour, when their heads were ſo topſy turvy as to believe *Melantha* preſent, and *Portia* abſent. Their dread leſt *Portia* as well as *Una* had obſerved their being thus miſtaken, and what was yet worſe, had penetrated the motive to their miſtake, rouſed all the *turba* in their boſoms, and ſet their whole ſouls into a flame: at laſt they turned off their rage by burſting into a loud fit of laughter, as if they had ſuddenly found a good jeſt: and on *Portia*'s enquiring the cauſe, they declared that they were laughing to think how

how ſhe and *Una* were miſtaken, in believing them to be in an error. For they only pretended to miſtake *Portia* for *Melantha*, and were following her example in playing with their own imaginations and whims.

SCENE

SCENE. XVI.

Is't reaſon we ſhould quarrel with the glaſs,
Which ſhows the monſtrous features of our face?

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

WHETHER *Ferdinand* had at that time one ſerious thought of marrying *Melantha*, I could not from his behaviour poſitively diſcover: and from this uncertainty my moſt aſſiduous care was neceſſary, to preſerve ſuch an even balance in my mind, as to prevent my being elated by ſelf-flattery into deceitful hopes, founded only on my own imagination. Nor on the other hand did I give way to deſpair,

deſpair, which too generally ariſes only from indignation, at not being treated according to the opinion we may have formed of our own deſerts. Such deſpair whilſt it wears the face of modeſty, is ſculking behind a borrowed diſguiſe, and is aſhamed to ſhew itſelf in its own natural colours.

The inward miſery of *Oliver* is not to be deſcribed on finding himſelf thus diſregarded; and the deſire of revenge againſt me and *Melantha*, for our preference of *Ferdinand*, actuated and tormented his mind: the deſire of revenge againſt his brother for deſerving to be preferred, imbittered every corner of his boſom. His bed, the proper place of reſt, afforded him no repoſe. And never were the words of the prophet, that "there is no peace, "ſaith my God, to the wicked," more truly verified than in the boſom of *Oliver*: as he was poſſeſſed with the higheſt degree of revenge, he was conſequently oppreſſed with the higheſt degree of miſery.

Una

Una at this picture dropped her eyes in token of ſoft pity, and turned her thoughts on *Portia*'s invocation to Bedlam, to enlarge itſelf.

Whilſt the eyes of all the *Cry* glared with horror, and altho' they felt to the quick the truth of *Portia*'s deſcription, yet they declared that it bore no reſemblance to any thing in nature, and was only a phantom of her own brain. They grew alſo ſo wondrouſly tender-hearted and humane, that they could not indure (they ſaid) to think on ſuch a picture of horror, as that with which *Portia* had preſented them. But this was not the firſt time ſhe had endeavoured to expoſe human nature, by dwelling on its deformities, or rather the deformities of her own depraved imagination.

Then, they would impoſe on others for truth, what they were conſcious was an abſolute falſehood; and *Dueſſa* herſelf, their chief orator, undertook with all her eloquence to plead the cauſe of benevolence, and to accuſe

accuſe *Portia* of having denied its exiſting in human nature.

Dueſſa performed her part perfectly to their ſatisfaction. She traced back by a partial remembrance all that *Portia* had ſaid, capable of being wreſted to their preſent purpoſe. She accuſed her of having juſtified bad characters, and depreciated good ones, in her pretended diſtinctions between *Prior*'s *Emma*, lady *Anne*, and the *Epheſian* matron. *Portia*'s introducing the new terms of *dextra* and *ſiniſtra*, was interpreted by *Dueſſa* into a deſign of exalting her favourites, and abuſing thoſe to whom ſhe bore an inveterate hatred. And from a long detail of attempted arguments, *Dueſſa* in the end deduced this logical concluſion; that all nice diſtinctions of characters are intended as a general ſatire againſt mankind; and finiſhed her harangue with an aſſertion, that *Portia* was the moſt malevolent ſatirical creature that ever yet was born.

Portia. So heavy a charge as you have now muſtered up againſt me, O ye *Cry*, I

cannot well paſs by in ſilence; but to the candor of *Una* I appeal, whether I am deſerving of your rigorous cenſures: or whether my endeavours have not been to ſupport the exiſtence of good characters; and to ſhew that the ſeeds of good-nature, benevolence, and every amiable quality are in almoſt every human breaſt; and would undoubtedly yield the firſt of ſuch grain, were they not choaked and ſmothered by the rank weeds, which men through choice, and not neceſſity, take pains to cultivate.

That my being deſirous of introducing the word *dexter* into the mind, to expreſs an uprightneſs of acting as well, as the *ſiniſter* is uſed, to point out paltry and baſe deſigns, can, I confeſs, as fairly be proved to ariſe from my deſire of depreciating human nature, as that all nice diſtinctions are a ſatire againſt mankind.

Oh ignorance, how often could I invoke thy friendly aid! Did you not, O ye *Cry*, perfectly know yourſelves, and were ye

not conſcious on which ſide you would be ranged; if, from a juſt diſtinction in character, the human race were to be properly divided, you would be no longer in dread of ſuch a diviſion.

When at firſt I was deſirous of introducing to you a good character, and ſo far from thinking it unnatural, declared him of my own acquaintance, you ſcreamed out that it was the *faultleſs monſter*; but when I contraſted it with a bad one, you favoured me with your attention, and hung on my words in hopes of receiving food for your malice. Your reſolutely denying that there was to be found ſuch a real character as miſs *Jenny*, and yet your readineſs to apply the characters of the two other ſiſters *Betty* and *Nanny*, in my ſtory of the merchant's daughters, fully prove the high opinion you have of human nature, which you now pretend ſo ſtrenuouſly to vindicate. If I commend any one from my own knowledge, you accuſe me of partiality; if from the ſame certainty I diſpraiſe or cenſure, 'tis ſet down

down to the account of prejudice. I cannot even warmly admire the writings of a known and approved author, but you immediately call forth for me the abuſive appellation of PUFF, in hopes by theſe means to mark with contempt and ſcorn every kind of deſerved praiſe.

Your eager thirſt after methods of abuſing me very little do I heed or regard: But your outcry that human nature is vilified, when one falſe or rotten heart is detected, your having the words *virtue* and *benevolence* continually in your mouths, your beſtowing every human virtue profuſely on all mankind, but taking them poſitively from every individual, is ſo common, ſo ſtale a practice, in order to impoſe upon the world a belief of your own great goodneſs, that nothing but perfect inexperience can be deceived by it.

If I am miſtaken, let *Una* correct my error; but as the caſe at preſent appears to me, your deſire of ſupporting the cauſe of virtue and goodneſs, againſt my at-

tempts to extirpate them from the human race, is like a petition from the wolves, that they may protect the ſheep againſt the watchful dog, or like the ſame requeſt made from the fox, to have a grant for being a ſole protector of the domeſtic feather'd kind.

This ingenious device, peculiar to the *Cry*, of declaring that human nature is vilified, and mankind attacked whenever any of their fallacies are laid open to public view, is one of thoſe *arcana* which rouſes all the *turba* in their breaſts, and fills them with the moſt dreadful apprehenſions on the leaſt danger of a diſcovery. Too well they knew the truth of what *Portia* had ſaid; and without the dreaded deciſion of *Una*, they clung cloſe to each other, muttering and meditating future vengeance.

Portia. The man or woman who is continually putting in practice ſly artifices, for vexing and teazing thoſe around them, and from whoſe mouth daily flows nothing

nothing but the words of ſpite and envy, ſhall not pretend, under the general notion of the goodneſs and benevolence of the human race, to hide the malignity of their own hearts. 'Tis from obſervation on all his words and actions, that I venture boldy to deſcribe the ſecret working of *Oliver*'s boſom: but he never was ſo perplexed in his life, as in his attempts to mollify the torments in his own breaſt, by communicating part of them to me and *Melantha*: for the characteriſtic difference between us two, render'd it impoſſible by the ſame methods to vex us both. *Melantha*'s mind he was perfectly acquainted with by the force of ſympathy; but not one of his wiſe maxims or general obſervations on the ſex, could lead him to the knowledge of a ſingle thought that paſſed in my breaſt. When he endeavoured therefore to communicate the *turba* to us both, *Jupiter* could grant but half his prayer.

One great diverſion with him was (for there was nothing ſo triflingly paltry that

a mind guided by the *ſiniſtra* will not deſcend to) that when he had been abroad with his brother, he would inform us of ſome peculiar notice that *Ferdinand* had taken of ſome pretty woman, in order to alarm our minds with jealous fears: and with *Melantha* he in part ſucceeded; but on me he had ſeldom any chance of enjoying the malicious pleaſure he propoſed to himſelf: nay even with *Melantha* he was not perfectly ſatisfied; for altho' ſhe might believe his report, yet would the joy ariſing from the knowledge, that *Ferdinand* could not fix his love on another woman without any diſappointment as well as her own, prevent her being ſo much vexed as *miſs Oliver* deſigned. One inſtance of this kind of girliſh foolery practiſed by him was as follows.

Ferdinand and his brother had been together near three weeks in the country, at the houſe of a gentleman with whom they had long been intimately acquainted. On their return, my pleaſure at again beholding *Ferdinand* was ſo great, that I was

animated

animated into a livelineſs of humour more than is commonly natural to me; and this was ſuch wormwood to *Melantha*, that it poiſoned all the comfort ſhe might otherwiſe have expected from his return. She would gladly have accepted of his abſence, for the ſake of my being barred his converſation. Beſides, ſhe could not prevail on herſelf to believe that I could be ſo viſibly and unaffectedly delighted only with the company of *Ferdinand*, unleſs I had flattered myſelf with having gained the preference in his eſteem. But *Melantha* had a laborious part to perform; for it was neceſſary in the part ſhe had undertaken of being my ſhadow and adopting my ſentiments, that ſhe ſhould appear filled with the higheſt joy on the return of *Ferdinand*, whilſt her boſom was really filled with the dreadfulleſt apprehenſions from ſeeing that gaiety of diſpoſition in me, which was her taſk to imitate. But of *Melantha* I ſpeak here only *en paſſant*, and ſhall now return to *Oliver*.

He took the opportunity of his brother's firſt abſence, after his coming back to town, to inform both *Melantha* and me of the great gaiety and unuſual pleaſantry of *Ferdinand* whilſt he was in the country. Miſtaken *Oliver!* to imagine that the knowledge of *Ferdinand*'s enjoying himſelf could ever wound my heart! I ſmiled from real pleaſure; and *Melantha* reſolving to continue the part ſhe had undertaken, twiſted her mouth in order to mimic that ſmile; but in reality her eyes grew fierce inſtead of brightening into chearfulneſs; and the thought that *Ferdinand* could enjoy himſelf in her abſence ſet the *turba* to their uſual work within.

Oliver ſaw *Melantha*'s perturbation. Sympathy diſcovered it to him; but he had no traces, nor could his wiſe maxims lend him any, by which he might read my mind. He was willing to make himſelf believe, that I was artfully concealing the uneaſineſs, which hearing of *Ferdiand*'s chearfulneſs in my abſence had given me; yet he ſaw ſomething he did not

not like, and the *turba* within made him feel ſomething which no one can like. However he was reſolved to try me to the utmoſt; and began therefore to throw forth ſome ſmall hints, as if *Ferdinand* had made love to one of the daughters of the gentleman to whom they paid their viſit. We could not but underſtand him; for to confeſs the truth, his ſmall hints were conveyed in the plaineſt terms imaginable.

Had *Melantha* heard that *Ferdinand* had been cruelly murdered, it would have brought joy to her heart, in compariſion with the intelligence which *Oliver* had now given her: and whilſt her eyes flaſhed fire, and her every feature expreſſed diſappointment and indignation at the thought that *Ferdinand* in her abſence could not only enjoy himſelf, but meet with an object worthy of his addreſſes; I confeſs a riſing ſigh was ſwelling in my boſom, which with ſome difficulty I ſuppreſſed.

The *Cry* all eagerly ſeized this ſigh of *Portia*'s, and worried it about till with their fallacious breaths they had ſwelled it into a raging ſtorm. They pronounced *Portia*'s confeſſion of this ſigh to be another abſolute contradiction of all her foregoing ſentiments. And it was now their choice to babble forth their triumph on their diſcovery of her contradictions in ironical terms, addreſſed not to *Portia*, but to each other. We thought, ſaid ſome of them, with how much pleaſure *Portia* could ſee *Ferdinand* married to another woman. —— Talking abſurdly you know is the common fate of all thoſe who ſet themſelves up for more than mortal. —— Great wits have ſhort memories, and are apt indeed to contradict themſelves. —— Then a kind of indolent ſelf-ſatisfied laugh was heard throughout the aſſembly.

Portia. I am not ſurprized that you, O ye *Cry*, can think I have talked the higheſt abſurdity, if it is poſſible to deduce from any of my paſt words ſuch a concluſion,

ſion, as that I ever could have given up *Ferdinand* with pleaſure; for all my proſpects of happineſs in this world were centered in the hope of his affections. *Ferdinand*, I muſt repeat, could not have been the ſame loſs to any other woman as to me; for I verily believe that I am the only one of his acquaintance who hath truly penetrated his character; and, conſequently, the only one who can properly be ſaid truly to love him.

In *Plato*'s dialogues, one of the diſciples of *Socrates* (after deſcribing a ſet of people to whom that philoſopher's converſation muſt have been diſagreeable) tells him, that ſuch people could not love him, however deſirous from other motives they might be of appearing in his company; and this becauſe they did not underſtand him. I may venture therefore, I think, to affirm, that without reciprocally underſtanding each other, there can be no true love. A man who chuſes a companion, whoſe capacity doth not reach high enough to comprehend any of his ideas, might (as

far

far as regards that ſingle companion) be as well ſtruck dumb; for the utility of language is to him entirely vaniſhed. Had I only read the character of ſuch a man as *Ferdinand* judiciouſly given, although he had paſſed through life a thouſand years ago, and had I known that at the ſame time there lived a *Portia*, whoſe head penetrated, and whoſe heart was warmed with that character; had they been ſeparated I could not but have ſighed: yet I freely confeſs the ſigh comes deeper from my heart, when I conſider it as my own caſe; and, without keeping a ſtrict guard over my thoughts, they would wander into the road towards diſcontent; and I could be ready to ſay, "'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous "pitiful!"

The *Cry* not underſtanding *Portia*'s humour in the above quotation, opened full mouthed againſt her, for pretending that ſhe thought or acted differently from all other women; for by her own account, they ſaid, ſhe was filled with that ſelf-compaſſion which ſhe had ſo much condemned; and

and was alſo full as much vexed at *Ferdinand*'s courting another woman as poor *Melantha* was.

Portia. If you will not, O ye *Cry*, underſtand the difference between a ſigh, attempting to riſe in a heart melted with gentle ſorrow, and a rageful look proceeding from a heart alarmed with tumultuous paſſions, I cannot poſſibly help it. This confuſing them together is not owing to your want of underſtanding; for had you not an obſtinate inclination to prove me guilty of abſurdity, you have no incapacity for making ſuch a diſtinction.

Although *Portia* never had, and indeed could not bring a greater accuſation againſt the *Cry*, than thus maliciouſly perverting and confounding all ſhe ſaid to the purpoſe of abuſing her; yet did this accuſation itſelf for the preſent quite reverſe the ſcene, and conquer that very inclination to abuſe of which ſhe had accuſed them.

The

The allowing that they poſſeſſed a capacity of diſtinguiſhing, was the ſoporiferous draught that calmed into a momentary repoſe the *turbà* in their boſoms. Although with this pleaſing bait they were to ſwallow the potion of knowing that their malice was not hid from *Portia*'s diſcernment, yet they were on a ſudden ſo totally changed, that they agreed by conſent that *Portia* was really poſſeſſed of a great deal of wit, joined to the moſt penetrating judgment. And would ſhe have ſubmitted to the inſult with patience, they would have beſtowed on her the moſt fulſome flattery; for by ſuch means they were willing to repay what they ſo highly eſteemed, namely, an acknowledgment that they poſſeſſed the trifling advantage of a head capable of diſtinguiſhing, whilſt they wanted that uprightneſs of heart which alone could enable them to make a proper uſe of that capacity.

Una, from the moment *Portia* had accuſed the *Cry* of what ſhe imagined the moſt

moſt dreadful of all charges, namely, perverſeneſs and malignity of heart, had expected that the ſharpeſt and moſt pointed arrows in their quiver would have been diſcharged at *Portia*. She was amazed therefore to find all their darts transformed into ſoft feathers, and all their indignation changed into a contention who moſt ſhould praiſe and admire her.

Portia. Wonder not, O my beloved and ever revered *Uua*, at the ſtrange and contradictory behaviour of the *Cry*. They lead a life of ſhutting cloſe their eyes from their great abhorrence of the light, yet ſuffer intolerable torments from the fear that their acquaintance ſhould ſuſpect that they are naturally blind; for nothing can equal their dread of being ſuſpected to labour under any natural defect. Only allow that they are able to behold the brightneſs of the ſun, whenever they are diſpoſed in inclination ſo to do; and ſo ſtrangely are they infatuated by this conceſſion, that, without any rage or reſentment, they will bear the

charge of thus willingly ſhutting out the bleſſing of light.

Una. Well *Portia* may you ſay that the *Cry* are ſtrangely infatuated: for this behaviour ſeems to me full as pregnant of madneſs, or the groſſeſt folly, as if a man was to hide his face with ſhame, or to ſwell with wrath and indignation, at its being known that he once accidentally ſtumbled for want of light; and yet ſhould ſtand unmoved, nor ſhew the leaſt ſigns of abaſhment, for being accuſed of having treacherouſly committed the moſt atrocious murder.

The *Cry* were ſo rapt up in the enjoyment of *Portia*'s acknowledging their capacities, that they did not hear one word of what paſſed between her and *Una:* but recollecting at laſt that part of *Portia*'s relation, from which by their falling on her riſing ſigh they had drawn her, they deſired her to proceed in her ſtory.

SCENE

SCENE XVII.

Hem aſtutia! TERENCE.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

PORTIA.

LIVER forming the ſame judgment of my riſing ſigh as you yourſelves (O ye *Cry*, juſt now formed, and from the ſame motives) triumphed in the joyful thought that he had communicated the *turba* to my boſom. But to purſue his triumph, he haſtened to acquaint us that *Ferdinand*, notwithſtanding his moſt ardent ſolicitations, had been refuſed by the young lady; and he was not wanting in intimations that he himſelf, if he pleaſed, might

might have been the real object of her public choice, as it was viſible to his penetrating eyes he was of her ſecret affections. Never could *Oliver*'s cunning artifices more thoroughly take effect than they did at this time on *Melantha*; for her rage and vexation on thinking ſhe had placed her affections, and was now languiſhing for a man whom another woman had refuſed, would have exceeded all bounds, but for the ſmall alleviation that I ſtood in the ſame wretched degree of mortification with herſelf.

As my love to *Ferdinand* depended not on ſuch outward accidents as the vague opinion of others, what a perfect diſappointment would *Oliver* have met with in me, had I continued to believe his ſilly inventions! but from the moment he had with ſo much pains endeavoured to inſinuate that he was preferred to his brother, the paltry deceit was all laid open to my eyes; and I viſibly perceived that the whole was nothing but a contrivance, firſt to teaze and vex both me and *Melantha*, and

and then to cure us of our love to *Ferdinand*.

The reaſon indeed that I at firſt gave the leaſt credit to any part of *Oliver*'s account was, that I believed *Ferdinand* to have a heart ſuſceptible of affection———

[She has not much reaſon for ſuch belief, whiſpered the *Cry* to each other, too ſoftly to be heard by *Portia*.]

——— and I doubted not the poſſibility of his finding an object agreeable to his taſte. 'Till *Oliver* therefore had told us of *Ferdinand*'s being refuſed from a preference given to himſelf, the ſtory was not quite incredible. Beſides, I knew it to be one of *Oliver*'s favourite maxims, in order to ſucceed in deceit, to mix up a large quantity of truth with falſehood. I make no doubt but from experience he could have compoſed a receipt, ſtampt *probatum eſt*, with as exact a meaſure of their juſt proportions as was ever drawn up by good houſewives for potting beef, woodcock, *&c.* Take of your falſehood (he would ſay).

ſay) ſo much; cram it into a ſtory, ſo cloſely compacted in all its circumſtances, that not the leaſt chink may be diſcerned; then pour over it as much of the butter of truth as will preſerve it from detection, and render it impoſſible for the keeneſt eye to penetrate through its covering to the falſehood concealed within. The ſeaſoning of gravity or humour muſt be varied according to the palate for which it is deſigned.

O cunning *Oliver!* I could let you (as well as many good houſewives, who are very buſy in following the directions of expenſive receipts in order to ſave money for their families) into a ſecret, which would be much more worth your notice; namely, that the *trueſt wiſdom* in you, and the *beſt houſewifry* in them, would be, inſtead of TAKING ſo much of one thing, and ſo much of another, to LET ALL YOUR INGREDIENTS ALONE.

I was inwardly convinced, as I before ſaid, of the falſehood of *Oliver*'s ſtory from the face of it: but I was ſome time after truly

truly informed, that the gentleman where they had paſſed their time was ſo pleaſed with the character and behaviour of *Ferdinand*, that he offered him a large fortune with his youngeſt daughter, if he would have become his ſon-in-law. This generous offer *Ferdinand*, in the handſomeſt manner, declined. His reaſons, or his motives, being not to the preſent purpoſe, I muſt beg to be excuſed from repeating.

Oliver ſoon perceived that my uneaſineſs was fled; he perceived it with no ſmall vexation: my behaviour baffled all his general obſervations upon women, put his wiſdom to a nonplus, and he had no other refuge to fly to but the making himſelf believe that I had not one grain of affection in my compoſition, and was the moſt ſtupid, inſenſible creature breathing.

The *Cry* here were in a comical dilemma. They had not yet loſt ſight of *Portia*'s acknowledgment of their capacities enough to ſuffer their deſire of abuſing her to riſe to its uſual height; yet the force of an old habit

habit was ſo ſtrong, that they could not help being delighted on receiving any image of her ſtupidity.

Portia. But whilſt *Oliver* was pleaſing himſelf with the thoughts of my inſipid want of affections, my imagination was employed in building a pleaſing fairy caſtle, concerning the life I would lead, if ever I ſhould be ſo happy as to become the wife of *Ferdinand.* For notwithſtanding the affectation of ſome women, who aſſert that they are married quite accidentally, and without having once thought of it; yet ſuch a ſcheme of life paſſes, I believe, in every woman's head, concerning the man whom ſhe thinks well enough of to deſire to marry him. There are ſome perhaps who go no farther than the viſiting ſcene, dreſſed in white ſatin to receive their company; whilſt others in their imaginations follow the ſad remains of their rich huſbands to the grave, and plan out their ſcheme of widowhood or a future marriage.

That

That the picture of the married life I wiſhed to lead with *Ferdinand* often came into my mind, I freely confeſs; but it is too whimſical perhaps to relate the workings of my own imagination at that time on this ſubject.

Una aſſured *Portia* that it was ſo far from being too whimſical, that on her ſaying ſhe had formed ſuch a ſcheme, ſhe herſelf was going to call on her for an honeſt repreſentation of it.

Thus encouraged *Portia* proceeded.

Portia. The two ideas, huſband and *Ferdinand*, were ſo cloſely connected in my imagination, that the former could not be mentioned without the image of the latter's becoming its pleaſant companion. I conſidered him as the huſband of my mind, the huſband of my voluntary choice, ſelected from among the reſt of mankind by the joint conſent of my judgment and inclination. And had I thought of being prevailed

vailed to marry any other man, I ſhould have eſteemed it little leſs than adultery: I ſhould ſhould have looked on ſuch an action with horror, and condemned myſelf as guilty of the higheſt treachery. To be bribed from the conſideration of wealth or grandeur to become the wife of one man, whilſt my heart is fixed upon another:—to marry a man, in whoſe converſation I could have no enjoyment:—to ſit at the upper end of one man's table (a very common prudential motive to marriage) and at the ſame time to wiſh another in his place:—what prudence! what goodneſs! It is a ſort of policy I could never fathom: and ſo far does charity begin at home, that I myſelf am the very laſt woman I would wiſh in ſuch a ſituation.

Portia's diſapprobation of thoſe methods of marrying, which the *Cry* approved, rouſed them into their old cabal againſt her, and they ſtood ready prepared to find matter of offence in her words.

Portia.

Portia. Whenever I read the ſpeech *Shakeſpear* hath put into the mouth of queen *Catherine* in his *Henry* VIII. wherein ſhe ſays,

I've been to you a true and humble wife,
At all times to your will conformable:
Ever in fear to kindle your diſlike,
Yea, ſubject to your count'nance; glad or ſorry
As I ſaw it inclin'd. When was the hour
I ever contradicted your deſire?
Or made it not mine too? Which of your friends
Have I not ſtrove to love, altho' I knew
He were mine enemy?

Juſt ſuch a wife I uſed to think could I with pleaſure make to *Ferdinand.* I could not hear *Shakeſpear's Portia* in the *Merchant of Venice,* freely and without reſerve giving herſelf and all her riches to the diſpoſal of *Baſſanio,* without ardently wiſhing for the power of uſing the ſame words, and acting in the ſame manner towards *Ferdinand.* How is my heart warmed when I read of the faith and true affection of the

Roman Arria to her *Petus!* and how often did my imagination prompt me with this ſecret wiſh,

My heart let Ferdinand *moſt ſtrictly prove:*
There's Arria's *truth, her innocence and love!*

Here the *Cry*, having read the ſtory of *Arria* and *Petus* in the *Spectators*, and fixing their thoughts on what they eſteemed the heroical part of her character, expreſſed their aſtoniſhment at *Portia*'s immenſe vanity and preſumption in thus boaſting, (as they called it,) of ſuch ſtrength and conſtancy of mind as would enable her to deſtroy herſelf rather than part with *Ferdinand*.

Portia. It is not the death but the life of *Arria* which is to me ſo exemplary. In what manner my fears might be alarmed at the approach of immediate diſſolution I pretend not to ſay; nor, as a chriſtian, could I think it juſtifiable, or even excuſable, to give my huſband ſuch a proof of my affection. But when I reflect on *Arria*'s gentleneſs

neſs of ſpirit; her chuſing retirement with her huſband, before all the moſt alluring baits of grandeur; her placing her chief enjoyment in her innocent endeavours to render her dear *Petus* happy; the joining her own cares with his in the education of their children; and, when *Petus* lay ill of a fever in one room, and their youngeſt favourite child dead in the next, her walking to and fro as if the child was yet living, feigning alſo a chearfulneſs which her heart was unable to feel, in order to ſupport the drooping ſpirits of her huſband—theſe are the virtues which raiſe my admiration: and it is her tender, her affectionate behaviour throughout her whole life, that I would wiſh to imitate.

Frequently have I thought within myſelf, to be placed in the boſom of my *Ferdinand*, not as a treacherous ſnake, but as his faithful friend; to have his entire confidence; to be indulged by him becauſe he ſees me capable of gratefully receiving ſuch indulgence, without crying, like a humoured child, for want of finding out my own deſires.

—— *is a conſummation*
Devoutly to be wiſh'd ——

[Here a riſing titter on *Portia*'s expreſſion ran through the *Cry*; but as ſhe knew there was no real cauſe for ſuch titter, without taking any notice of it ſhe proceeded.]

—There is a haughty pride of mind that ſcorns even indulgence itſelf, as it implies power and ſuperiority in the perſon who beſtows it; but there is no idea of pleaſure my higheſt imagination ever could form equal to that of being indulged by the man I love.

The great error that women fall into about marrying is, the ſeeking wives inſtead of huſbands. The fear of having it thought that they have ſubmiſſion enough in their tempers to be governed, ſets the whole *turba* at work in their breaſts. To join the idea of love and obedience is not in their power. To marry ſenſibly let the woman chuſe the man ſhe can obey with pleaſure. To marry *Ferdinand*, and then

to

to obey him, ever appeared to me as if I was commanded (as *Deſdemona* ſays on another occaſion)

——— *to do peculiar profit*
To my own *perſon* ———

It is a command to follow the bent of my own inclinations; for ſo far am I from thinking the vow of obedience in the matrimonial ſervice a burthen, that it is my utmoſt pleaſure. With *Ferdinand* how joyfully (thought I) could I purſue the ſame ſtudies! I could partake all his pleaſures (nay, I muſt partake them, for his being pleaſed muſt communicate the ſame ſenſations to my heart) and willingly could I ſhare, or rather monopolize all his griefs. As in my choice of *Ferdinand* I am determined by nothing but himſelf, no outward circumſtances, no ſituations, no opinions, beſides my own, could have any influence on my mind.

But it would be endleſs to repeat the various pictures of delight my imagination

formed on the thought of being his wife. Very juſtly does a ningenious poet ſay, that to a thinking mind

On ev'ry thorn delightful wiſdom grows:
In ev'ry rill a ſweet inſtruction flows.

And with ſuch a companion as my *Ferdinand*, every ſhrub, every buſh, every flower of the field, muſt alſo become objects of the higheſt pleaſure. With my principal wiſh thus fully gratified, what an inexpreſſible luſtre muſt be thrown over every outward object, whilſt I placed my delight in my huſband's friendſhip, eſteemed his underſtanding, made his will a law of liberty, and ſpent my whole life in giving him every moment freſh inſtances of what, in my opinion, only deſerves the name of true love!

All the men amongſt the *Cry* were ſo fixed in attention on *Portia*'s allowing the ſubordination of the wife to the huſband, that never would ſhe from them have met with the leaſt interruption in her preſent

ſent ſubject of diſcourſe; and as to the female part of the aſſembly, they were rendered at preſent perfectly incapable of making any obſervations, by no other accident than being all faſt aſleep. For from the time that *Portia* had mentioned the word *obedience to a huſband*, an indolent gaping had ſtretched their mouths, and heavy ſlumber weighed down their eye lids, till they were involved in a general and ſound repoſe.

Una ſmiled at the warmth of *Portia*'s imagination, whilſt ſhe was reviewing the pictures ſhe had formed of living with *Ferdinand*, and was pleaſed to ſee the joy which dwelt on her countenance.

And we doubt not but *Portia*, rather than have quitted the ſubject, would have been found talking on till this moment, had not one of the *Cry* in her ſleep ſuddenly fallen from her ſeat; which accident awoke the reſt of the ſleepers, and alarmed the whole aſſembly.

The *Cry* were all ſeized with ſuch an immoderate fit of laughter at this facetious joke (for the poor woman ſtruck her forehead ſo violently againſt the edge of a ſeat as to fetch the blood) that *Portia* alone was capable of taking her up, giving her aſſiſtance, or acting with any propriety on ſuch a *merry* occaſion. The lady however was forced to be carried out into the air; and for the preſent *Una* diſmiſſed the whole aſſembly, appointing another general meeting for *Portia* to proceed with her ſtory.

End of Part the Third.

PRO-

PROLOGUE

TO

PART the FOURTH.

OUR aſſembly being again met, we implore as at firſt your aſſiſtance, gentle reader, that by your imagination you would add another perſonage to thoſe with whom you are already brought acquainted. Her name *Cylinda*. Her character —— ſuch as will

appear by her diſcourſe, and the relation of her paſt life.

Should our *Portia* have been ſo favoured by our readers, that, pleaſed and engaged by her character and converſation, they ſhould eſteem every interruption to the concluſion of her hiſtory a bar to their pleaſure; we would beg leave to apologize for the introduction of *Cylinda*, by a few obſervations on the nature of an epiſode; which according to *Boſſu*, is an intereſting incident not abſolutely neceſſary to the fable, nor yet ſo detached from it, as to carry the reader quite out of ſight of the chief perſonages, or the firſt intent of the poem. Might we not add alſo another eſſential to the above deſcription of a proper epiſode, namely, that it ought to be ſuch an incident as is introduced in order to call forth ſome characteriſtic virtue of the principal perſonage? Suppoſe, for inſtance, that *Ulyſſes* the hero of *Homer*'s *Odyſſey* (or the hero of any other poetical fable) had in his travels met with

with a beautiful young princeſs in diſtreſs, and ſhe ſhould tell him a long and moving ſtory of her paſt life and misfortunes; was the reader never more to hear of this princeſs, or was it not in the power of the hero to redreſs her wrongs, and relieve her anxiety, her ſtory, however intereſting or entertaining in itſelf, hath certainly no buſineſs there, and is abſurdly impertinent: but if from the relation of her life he ſhould be enabled to puniſh her oppreſſors, or to aſſiſt her in her diſtreſs; would not this be a pertinent, as well as an agreeable epiſode, becauſe it would tend towards the exemplification of ſome of the hero's virtues?

In this view we think we can with truth aſſure our readers, that *Cylinda* is no impertinent intruder into our aſſembly; but being brought thither (as *Portia* was before her) by a ſwift meſſenger called fancy, ſhe will by her own narrative beſt explain the neceſſity for her appearance. Yet if ſtrict criticiſm ſhould ſtill

frown

frown on our method, let candor and good-humour forgive what is done to the beſt of our judgment, for the ſake of perſpicuity in the ſtory, and the delight and entertainment of our candid reader.

PART

PART the FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The mind when turn'd adrift, no rules to guide,
Drives at the mercy of the wind and tide;
Paſſion and Fancy toſs it to and fro.

Dr. YOUNG.

PORTIA. CYLINDA. UNA. The CRY.

CYLINDA.

MY father was a learned and generally eſteemed a very wiſe man, for he had the honour of attaining the higheſt degree of approbation from the whole body of moral philoſophers. I loſt my mother when I was very young; and, as I was an

an only child, in my welfare and future proſperity my father placed all his worldly happineſs. His principal delight was to inſtruct me; and he choſe to educate me juſt in the ſame manner as if I had been a boy. To render my learning more agreeable to me, he ſent for his ſiſter's ſon, my little couſin *Phaon*, who was about three years older than myſelf, to educate him with me; thinking by ſuch a companion I ſhould be both improved and delighted. My couſin was a ſpritely boy, and had very good natural parts; but notwithſtanding his advantage in years, I did not ſuffer him to outrun me in any ſort of learning; and by the time I was ſixteen I became an exceeding good *latin* ſcholar, and was pretty far advanced in *greek*.

The *Cry* ſuddenly ſtarted on the very mention of a woman's underſtanding *greek*; but as they had from the very firſt appearance of *Cylinda* conceived a ſtrong hope that ſhe was rather more inclined to their party than to that of their enemy;

they

they huſhed themſelves into ſilence, and were filled with expectation of gaining by her a compleat triumph over *Portia*, who they were pretty poſitive, from her never having in expreſs terms boaſted of her learning, had no learning to make her boaſt of.

Cylinda. I was extremely handſome, inſomuch that I might have had my choice of admirers amongſt all the young gentlemen in the neighbourhood; but I was ſo fond of my books, and ſo pleaſed with my couſin's company, that I ſhunned all other converſation.

Cylinda ſpoke this of her being handſome, with ſuch an air of indifference, that the *Cry* at that inſtant found they had no great affection for her. If ſhe would thoroughly have recommended herſelf to their admiration, ſhe ſhould have ſwelled, and puffed, and ſhewed that her whole mind was filled with the knowledge and admiration of her own beauty, and at the ſame time have practiſed every

fooliſh

foolish affectation imaginable, to have pretended an ignorance of it.

Cylinda. The vanity of dress or person, which so fills and possesses most girls, had no effect on me. My vanity was more gratified by despising such things, and I soared at what I thought much higher game. My swift progress in learning, and my great love to reading, greatly increased my father's delight in me; and he was so pleased with the enjoyment of the conversation within our own family, that we employed very few of our hours in visiting; or scarce ever went even to our neighbouring town, which was but three miles from my father's house. All the time that my father could spare me from his presence, I employed in ranging about the fields, and reading the most admired authors. Every fine sentiment charmed me; and every spritely thought played and increased in my imagination, till in a short time I began to look on myself as the goddess of wisdom; and how much in my own judgment did I blame *Paris*, that

he had not preſented the apple to *Minerva!* But as my father's inſtructions related only to moral philoſophy, and as his reaſonings were all concerning the *nature of things*, the *beauty of virtue*, and the diſtinctions of moral good and evil, a thought now and then ſtruck me about RELIGION, and every time this thought ſtruck me it puzzled me. At laſt I communicated my doubts to my father, and he in anſwer talked I believe a full hour about the nature of mankind and natural religion: from which I collected no more than this:—That 'twas very right to do right, and very wrong to do wrong.—But as I cannot ſay that he gave me any very intelligible ideas, and as I had a very high opinion of his underſtanding, I concluded there was a myſtery in religion above mortal comprehenſion, or at leaſt that it was perfectly incommunicable to another. I therefore took a reſolution to chuſe my own religion, and to ſettle my own rule of life. I had read over many books of philoſophy, and had got a vaſt deal of matter into my head. I had no

fixed

fixed principle, but ſuffered my imagination to rove and play amongſt the heap of unregulated ſtuff that my memory had heaped together; ſometimes to one point and ſometimes to another, without any glimmering of a ſettled path.

The *Cry* never were ſo puzzled in their lives, as to know what to make of *Cylinda*. Some of her ſentiments and actions they did not diſapprove, yet her manner of relating them was by no means according to their fancy. *Portia* they knew they hated, and conſequently thought her their enemy; ſuch a character as *Melantha* they knew they loved, and therefore thought her their friend: but *Cylinda* was quite above their comprehenſion. However they agreed amongſt themſelves for the preſent to hold a perfect neutrality towards her, till they ſhould find out cauſe by her ſtory, for an open declaration of war, or a league of laſting friendſhip.

Cylinda. Confounded in the vanity of unconnected knowledge, with which I had filled

filled my memory; my imagination overleaped all bounds, and with its own wandering velocity almoſt diſtracted me. I wanted ſome pilot to guide my thoughts, that every blaſt of wind might not ſhatter and overſet me. I wanted ſome object of worſhip; ſome rule on which to depend; and a mind in this ſtate will make ſome deity of its own, nor is it unlikely but inclination will bear the greateſt ſway in its formation. *Montaigne*, in a chapter where he collects together a vaſt variety of cuſtoms from different nations, mentions one place where every perſon made a deity to worſhip, according to what beſt pleaſed his own humour; but I think he need not have put this into his enumeration of extraordinary cuſtoms, for we have no occaſion to go farther than a little obſervation amongſt thoſe around us, to convince us of its credibility.

This cuſtom was perfectly agreeable to my humour; altho' I practiſed it at that time without the leaſt conſideration of its force, or having the leaſt gueſs at my

my own motives. 'Tis reflexion ſince that hath made the diſcovery: for on quitting any purſuit for a new one, I always clearly perceived the fallacy of the rejected favourite, but was as warmly fond of my new-adopted whim, till for ſome other that alſo was rejected and thrown aſide.

Agreeable then to my preſent inclination, I formed the object of my own worſhip, which was no other than my own underſtanding.

The *Cry*, who had all ſtood trembling with fear till they could diſcover what object of worſhip *Cylinda* would chuſe, now overjoyed, clapped their hands, called her laſt ſentence a fine ſentiment, and encored it with the utmoſt vociferation.

Whilſt *Una* ſighed at the melancholy conſideration, that ſo lively an imagination, and ſo good a capacity as *Cylinda* ſeemed to be miſtreſs of, ſhould be ſo thrown away, as only to become fewel to make

make her errors blaze out with the greater ſtrength, and to place them in the more conſpicuous light.

The *Cry* on recollection were not ſo perfectly pleaſed as at firſt they ſeem'd with *Cylinda*'s manner of declaring her worſhip for her own underſtanding; for the true phraſe they had been accuſtomed to, in order to expreſs the ſame thing, was a worſhip of human reaſon in general. *Cylinda* therefore had in this rather betrayed the cauſe, by fairly confeſſing that it was to her own underſtanding alone that all her veneration was paid. But not caring to contradict what they had before applauded, the *Cry* continued their encore of her laſt words, nor would ſuffer her to proceed without a repetition of them.

Cylinda. Well then —— the object of my worſhip was no other than my own underſtanding. And the uſe I made of all the learning I had attained, was to gaze at and review it with admiration, or rather

rather I made it a ladder on which I mounted to the admiration of my own perfections. My couſin *Phaon* too, who was bred up with the ſame fluctuating principles, or rather half-formed notions with myſelf, greatly contributed towards my yielding up an implicit faith in the infallibility of this my new-formed deity. But as *Phaon* had a good deal the ſame diſpoſition with myſelf, we ſhould undoubtedly have quarrelled, and grown into inveterate enemies, on the mutual ſuſpicion of both admiring ourſelves more than each other: a great contention and rivalſhip muſt neceſſarily have followed, before we could have decided which of us ſhould have been endued with imagined divinity, or which ſhould have ſubmitted to have acknowledged mortality, had it not been for an accident not extremely unnatural in our ſituation. I was now juſt ſixteen, in the bloom of youth, and poſſeſſed of an uncommon ſhare of vivacity and ſpirit. So far had I made uſe of my reading, that it aſſiſted me to vary my ideas, and to render me agreeable in converſation; for I had too much real underſtanding

ſtanding to deſcend to that paltry vanity of growing impertinent, and ſuffering my ſelf-admiration to babble forth in every ſentence that I uttered. *Phaon* was young and amorous; therefore, inſtead of contending with me for a ſuperiority of underſtanding, he admired the beauty of my perſon, the temple which my new deity inhabited; and provided he could enjoy the pleaſure of beholding the beauties of the outward ſtructure, he was contented to worſhip the ſame idol with myſelf. This was ſuch a pleaſing piece of flattery to my darling inclination, that although I had before never conſidered *Phaon* in any other light than as a companion allotted me by my father in order to promote my ſtudies, yet I now began daily to diſcover in him ſuch a variety of charms as rendered his converſation the moſt exquiſite of pleaſures. *Phaon* was but three years older than myſelf; yet (as I have ſince reflected on his character and conduct) had he as much ſubtilty and art as he could have obtained from a life of long experience. His diſcourſe to me was all concerning books

books and philoſophy, never ſo much as mentioning my beauty; for had he not diſguiſed his admiration of my outward form under a pretence of adoring my own idol, he would highly have offended me; I ſhould have thought that my underſtanding was affronted, and ſhould have believed that he could have ſaid as much to every illiterate girl, whoſe fair ſkin might attract his inclination. *Phaon* ſoon diſcovered where all my weakneſs lay, and bent his whole force to increaſe that weakneſs.

The *Cry*, who had been rapturouſly (like *Bajazet*) enjoying in thought the picture of *Cylinda*'s happineſs in having ſuch a lover as *Phaon*, at the word *weakneſs*, all ſtarted—all groaned.——

Whilſt *Portia*'s eyes expreſſed a ſudden pleaſure from a new-conceived hope of *Cylinda*, and by interchanging a look with *Una*, they reciprocally underſtood each others thoughts.

Cylinda.

Cylinda. Whenever we read any book together, *Phaon* took care to inſinuate that I had on every ſubject much brighter thoughts of my own: and the uſe he made of converſing with me was, by degrees to yield up all his opinions to mine, till he became the echo and approver of all my ſentiments.

[Oh rapture! thought the *Cry.*]

He frequently called me his *Sappho*, and, ſuperſcribed to me under that name, wrote ſeveral extreme pretty poetical pieces, all addreſſed to my underſtanding as a real divinity——

[Delightful! charming! had the *Cry* ſpoke, would now have been their exclamation.]

—When he had a mind that I ſhould embrace any opinions fitted to ſerve his turn, he would give only ſome diſtant intimation; and then artfully leading me into a repetition of ſuch ſentiments, would receive

them as perfectly new; and by his acquiescence (not by fulsome praises) confirmed them in my mind, and flattered me to the highest pitch of gratification. He knew that my imagination would not suffer the most distant hint to be lost; and by this artful manner he took care to convey into my mind a sentiment which hath sacrificed the chastity of whole hecatombs of women. This is no other than that women of uncommon understanding, and a superiority of parts, ought not to be tied in fetters by the rules of honour or the forms of established custom: that it is a mark of true spirit to break through such servile and ridiculous chains, fit to be imposed only on the vulgar and illiterate; and that 'tis a proof of the highest wisdom to give an uncontrouled liberty to the violence of our own inclinations.

The female part of the *Cry* divided on this question; and a debate was likely to ensue; in which it appeared pretty plain from the beginning of it, that the parties were more nearly concerned in the dispute

than as a mere matter of opinion: but the curioſity of ſome of them was ſo great to hear the reſult of *Phaon*'s courtſhip, that they amongſt themſelves inſiſted upon a ſilence for *Cylinda* to proceed with her ſtory.

Cylinda. So beſotted was I by *Phaon*'s artful manner of addreſs, that I ſuffered this opinion to creep into my boſom; and to fix itſelf there ſo ſtrongly, that it failed not of its pernicious influence through the whole courſe of my life. Care was now taken by him that *Ovid*'s epiſtles ſhould never be out of my reach; and there I was to learn that the wit and genius of *Sappho* conſiſted in the violence of her uncontrouled paſſions; from whence I was farther to conclude, that in order to prove my own title to genius and underſtanding, I muſt follow her example. Thus was I commanded by the divinity I worſhipped, to aſſiſt my imagination in inflaming my paſſions; and if I would be another *Sappho*, I muſt neceſſarily be in love with another *Phaon*. Variety of books alſo to my pre-

ſent purpoſe occurred to my memory; for there have been writers in all ages, who, in order to gratify the vanity of diſplaying a lively imagination, have employed their time and capacities, if not deſignedly, yet heedleſly, for the purpoſe of ſoftening and deluding the young and tender mind.

Oh Amarilli, Amarilli, &c. would I often repeat; and highly was I pleaſed with my own wiſdom in diſcovering the folly of thoſe people, who would imagine that nature, or the God of nature (for I always conſidered them as ſynonymous terms) would give laws to reſtrain thoſe paſſions which were as natural to us as to the feathered race; yet with the utmoſt truth can I declare, that I had in reality a very ſmall degree of any paſſion that actuated me, beſides that of ſelf-admiration: for I could have reſiſted all the inclination I had for *Phaon*, with much leſs pains than I took to impoſe on myſelf the belief that I was in love with him; and often was I forced to have recourſe to my memory for his laſt pleaſing piece of flattery, in order to prevent

prevent the fallacious ſtructure from tumbling to the ground. In ſhort, my exceſſive love of flattery was the foundation of my fancied love of *Phaon*; and by the pleaſure which he perceived he could by that means give me, I fear it was but too likely that he would very ſoon have gratified all his wiſhes, had not my father (perhaps from ſuſpecting the truth) on a ſudden ſent him abroad with a gentleman who was going to *Turkey*. What confirmed me in the opinion that my father had diſcovered my liking to *Phaon*, and that he by no means approved it, was, that no ſooner had he ſent my couſin away, than he informed me that he had a propoſal of marriage for me from the uncle of a young gentleman who was deſirous of marrying his nephew, and preferred me as a wife for him before any young lady in the neighbourhood. My father was going to tell me what an eaſy fortune the young gentleman poſſeſſed, and what his uncle would alſo do for him; when I told him, that as he himſelf had taught me to deſpiſe all mercenary views, I hoped he would not think me capable of

being moved by riches. My father kindly aſſured me, that fortune was in this caſe the leaſt inducement; for the young gentleman was a man of an unexceptionable character, was juſtly eſteemed by every body, and he doubted not but he would make me extremely happy. I very earneſtly entreated him to mention the affair no more; for I was ſo extremely eaſy and happy, I ſaid, with the life which I paſſed with him, that nothing could make me wiſh to change it; nor did I even deſire to know who the gentleman was that had made the propoſal: for, as I was fully determined (if he would give me leave to make ſuch a choice) not to marry any one at preſent, I ſhould rather be ſpared the uneaſineſs of a particular refuſal. My father aſſured me, that my happineſs was always his chief point in view; and ſince he ſaw me ſo very averſe to marriage, and ſo pleaſed and contented with living with him, and being as he confeſſed the comfort and joy of his life, he would no farther urge an affair that by any means was diſagreeable to me. I returned my father a

thouſand thanks for his kind indulgence to me in giving me this freedom of refuſal, and I was greatly pleaſed alſo with his complying with my peculiar whim of not knowing who my intended lover was, as it might ſpare me an uneaſy reſtraint, ſhould I, by accident, fall into his company. I had in reality no inclination for marriage; but what determined me to be ſo reſolute in my refuſal of I know not whom, was, that I had now an opportunity of applauding myſelf for an imagined conſtancy to my couſin *Phaon*, whoſe abſence had ſo increaſed my fancied paſſion for him, that nothing could, in my opinion, have moved the ſteadineſs of my love.

I reſolved, if poſſible, to ſurpaſs all the examples that are left us of women whoſe fidelity and love were not to be ſhaken; and with what reſolution in my own imagination did I refuſe as large a train of lovers as the faithful *Penelope*, in hopes of the return of my wandering *Phaon!*

It was not long before I chanced to be perſonally addreſſed by two young gentlemen more. Their perſons or converſation I cannot ſay were any way agreeable to me; and having refuſed them both, I exulted in topping the part of conſtancy I had at preſent undertaken to act. But in juſtice to my own heart I muſt declare, that had they been leſs exceptionable, I ſhould have thought myſelf meanly treacherous could I have condeſcended to have given my hand to one man, whilſt my thoughts were wandering after another. Yet all my conſtancy to *Phaon* did not ariſe from any virtues of his, but from a deſire of exerciſing a virtue, which was to make me the object of my own admiration; and had I received the moſt demonſtrable evidence of his being ever ſo bad a man, it would not in the leaſt have ſtaggered my conſtancy; for the leſs he deſerved my favour, the more generoſity ſhould I exert in beſtowing it on him.

[The

[The *Cry* now all looked as if they ſpied a brother.]

But it was not many months before my father received an account that my couſin *Phaon* was dead of a fever, which ſeized him on his voyage: and this news releaſed me from that exceſs of conſtancy, which was to wait for his return; but I was in reality extremely ſorry for him, and grieved very heartily. I raiſed pictures from poetry of his being ſnatched away in the bloom of youth, and untimely brought to his grave: but as deep ſorrow, eſpecially where the foundation was ſo very weak, could not dwell long in my mind, and was really very tireſome, I choſe another play-thing, and rejoiced in the thought, that as my worſhipper was dead, he was incapacitated from proſtrating himſelf at the ſhrine of any other idol. And now was my mind ſoon reſtored to perfect tranquillity; and I was at liberty to find for my imagination what new employment I might think moſt proper or agreeable.

The *Cry* were ſtill perfectly at a loſs, and groveling in the dark as to *Cylinda*'s character; and the picture of a multitude ſtaring at the ſun's eclipſe, and gaping big with expectation when he will again blaze forth, and bring them new light, would be the ſtrongeſt reſemblance of their preſent ſituation.

SCENE

SCENE. II.

To mirth's tribunal drag the caitiff train;
Where mercy ſleeps and nature pleads in vain.
And whence this luſt to laugh? what fond pretence?
Why Shafts'b'ry *tells us mirth's the teſt of ſenſe;*
Th'enchanting touch, which fraud and falſhood fear,
Like Una's *mirror, or* Ithuriel's *ſpear.*
Not ſo fair Truth. ——
ESSAY on RIDICULE, by Mr. WHITEHEAD.

PORTIA. CYLINDA. UNA. The CRY.

CYLINDA.

AS ſoon as I had baniſhed the thoughts of my couſin *Phaon* from my mind, my uſual bent for ſelf-admiration returned, and my imagination was employed in ſearching for demi-gods, who ſhould bow down before me, and every moment bring

to

to my remembrance my own exalted underſtanding.

I had fixed in my mind the higheſt admiration for my lord *Shafteſbury*'s writings, which I believe originally aroſe from the common converſation I heard at table from my father and his companions. Nothing could be more exactly adapted to the humour I at this time indulged, than that freedom of thought and enquiry, which he aſſerts to be the diſtinguiſhing prerogative of the human mind. I was by him conveyed in imagination on the throne of judgment, and all nature ſeemed waiting with dependence on my determination. The crowns and ſcepters of the whole world laid at my feet, would not have given me half the gratification as thus believing myſelf the ſovereign judge of all things. I had ſuch an averſion to every thing that had the leaſt appearance of being gloomy or moroſe, and ſuch a delight in giving an unbounded vent to every whimſical piece of pleaſantry which preſented itſelf to my fancy, that the making

ing RIDICULE the TEST OF TRUTH was moſt perfectly agreeable to my inclinations. I turned therefore every ſmart expreſſion, or *bon mot* of my author, into a baſis on which to build ſomething that I called a principle; and thus whilſt the ſtanding ridicule, or not ſtanding it, was to prove truth or falſehood, I joined with my author in boaſting my ſecurity, that however I might be *frightened* out of my wits, I never could be *ridiculed* out of them. That pleaſant fancy of a grave biſhop's believing in fairies, * with the words *tradition* and *revelation* being jumbled in ſo very near to that ſtory, had the effect deſigned, and eaſily convinced me, that all belief in revelation or tradition had in it ſomething very ridiculous, and therefore could not ſuit with the dignity of human wiſdom. The ridicule of believing in fairies ran away with me, and I began to ſuſpect every thing of being a childiſh incredible tale.

* Characteriſtics, vol. I.

tale. Thus on the one hand was I allured, whilſt on the other I was terrified by ſuch expreſſions as theſe, THE FETTERS OF PRIESTCRAFT, BIGOTRY, SUPERSTITION, VULGAR ENTHUSIASM, SOLEMN MUMMERY, RELIGIOUS IMPOSTURE, and all RESTRAINTS made to BUBBLE the underſtanding, and to ENSLAVE the FREE and GENEROUS SPIRIT. The illuſtrations which he uſes too from outward objects, came very ſtrongly to the aſſiſtance of raiſing my horror at the thoughts of any reſtraint. "Nor do we "ſay (writes our [b] author) that he is a "good man, when having his hands tied "up he is hindered from doing the miſ-"chief he deſigns, or (which is in a man-"ner the ſame) when he abſtains from "executing his ill purpoſe, through a "fear of ſome impending puniſhment, or "through the allurement of ſome exterior "reward." The word *ſlavery* had before ſufficiently raiſed my horror; but when the

[b] Characteriſtics, vol. II.

the picture of ſlavery illuſtrated by a man bound in chains was placed before my view, nothing but the idea of condemned felons preſented themſelves to my imagination, and I fled immediatly from ſuch a diſagreeable ſpectacle into the pleaſing contemplation of my own liberty of judgment, and the free agency of all my faculties. The latter part of my author's before-quoted ſentence, where he makes the fear of puniſhment or hope of reward indications of a ſervility of ſpirit, was not loſt upon me: for I felt ſuch a liberality in the thought of being good, becauſe I myſelf had diſcovered it to be right and fit, ſuch an exaltation of my own underſtanding, in being thus made ſole judge to myſelf of right and wrong, that I diſdained to be fettered by the paltry fear of puniſhment, or allured by the ſelfiſh hope of reward. I ſcorned all reſtraint and dependence, and eſteemed myſelf free and unbounded as the air. How was I charmed when I read the words *virtue* [e] and

merit

[e] Characteriſtics, vol. II.

merit uſed as ſynonymous terms, and found them confined to the human ſpecies! Here was an opportunity for me to be conveyed in fancy above the clouds, and looking down on the whole creation, to build a ſecond imaginary temple dedicated to my merit. Yet how great the ſuſpenſe, whether to give the higheſt rank to my long deified *underſtanding* or my new dignified *merit!* An altar was due to the former for its judicious diſtinctions of right from wrong, with its direction of my affections; and to the latter in that I was poſſeſſed of ſuch natural good affections to need no directions. VOLUNTARY UNCOMMANDED VIRTUES independent of all hope or fear, were the only ones I could bear to be poſſeſſed of, as they alone ſeemed to be the produce of my own determinations. But I was warmed into enthuſiaſm whilſt I contemplated my author's picture of virtue. I found daily delight by diſcovering in myſelf all the GENEROUS AFFECTIONS which he commends. I felt, or fancied I felt, a CLOSE SYMPATHY, a CONSPIRING VIRTUE, a

CON-

CONFEDERATING CHARM, and an HERDING INCLINATION towards the whole ſpecies. The SYMPATHY, the BEAUTY, the ORDER of NATURE raiſed in my mind ſuch a kind of HEROISM, as my author himſelf allows to the ſame paſſion as PHILANTHROPY. But with what exceſſive delight did I embrace the thought, that the DEITY muſt be the BEST NATURED [d] BEING in the univerſe! and my aſſent to this opinion was founded perhaps on the very ſame baſis, as that on which the noble author himſelf formed that opinion. For I was naturally poſſeſſed of a great ſhare of good-nature, and had beſides very early in life found out the political uſe of it, enough to know that ill-nature, ill-humour, and fourneſs of temper, would only create my own miſery: ſo that whilſt I was approving the ſentiment of the deity's good-nature, I in reality fixed my approbation on my own.

Portia

[d] Characteriſtics, vol. I.

Portia ſmiled at the uncommon manner of *Cylinda*'s repreſenting her own principles and diſpoſition; and the *Cry* looked full of inward diſpleaſure.

Cylinda. In lord *Shafteſbury*'s rhapſody is the following paragraph "Nor *could* "God witneſs for himſelf, or aſſert his "being any other way to men, than by "revealing himſelf to *their reaſon*, ap-"pealing to *their judgment*, and ſubmit-"ing *his ways* to *their cenſure* and cool "deliberation." To which I yielded with my whole heart an abſolute aſſent. What follows may be found in his miſcellaneous [a] reflexions. "Man is "not only by nature ſociable within the "limits of his own ſpecies or kind; but "in a yet more generous and extenſive "manner. He is not only born to vir-"tue, friendſhip, honeſty and faith, but to "religion, piety, adoration, and a GENE-ROUS

[a] Vol. III.

" ROUS SURRENDER of his mind to what-
" ever happens from that SUPREME CAUSE,
" or ORDER of things, which HE ACKNOW-
" LEDGES intirely juſt and perfect." To which I yielded, as implicit an aſſent as to the former; ſince thoſe two ſentences contained all the doctrine to which my inclination led me to give any credit. For to think that there were things which GOD himſelf *could not* do, immediately took from me all thoſe flying notions that ever forced themſelves on my thoughts of my own imbeciſſity. This in a manner equalled me with the deity: then that the deity was to ſubmit to *my* cenſures, not only equalled, but made me ſuperior to the ſupreme being. I could wander in the fields meditating on my author's rhapſody on the beauty of nature, could pick up even pebble-ſtones or falling leaves, and by examining the contexture of their parts, could believe myſelf led to the worſhip of that *deity*, who was to ſubmit to *my* cenſures. For he was *neceſſarily* to ſubmit to me, and I was *generouſly* to ſurrender myſelf to him; and

where

where there is *neceſſary ſubmiſſion* on the one ſide, and *generoſity* on the other, 'tis very eaſy to determine which is in reality the ſuperior.

My author's account of the [f] *Egyptian* myſteries and idolatries, mixed as it is with other parts of hiſtory collected together, plainly ſhewed me the truth of that verſe quoted by him from *Dryden*,

That *prieſts of all religions are the ſame.*

From whence nothing could be more natural than to draw this concluſion, that religion itſelf was all policy and prieſtcraft, fit only to awe the vulgar and illiterate; but far beneath the free and generous mind, which diſdained ſuch paltry motives to goodneſs as hope or fear, and whoſe God was to ſubmit to its judgment. A diſintereſted ſocial affection appeared to me the only moral virtue, and a *gene-*

[f] Characteriſtics, vol. III.

a *generous ſurrender* of my worſhip to my creator (becauſe my own wiſdom had diſcovered him, and becauſe I judged it proper to pay him ſuch adoration) the only true religion. For that God *had not* revealed himſelf to me by any other than the foregoing means I was thoroughly perſuaded; having determined with my author that he *could not*. Thus had I made up my mind ſo cloſe, that there was no loop-hole as I thought for the entrance of any other opinion: and if any other notion contradictory to my beloved free ſocial ſcheme dared but to make the leaſt appearance, I turned it into ſome ridiculous light, burſt out a laughing, and by the teſt of ridicule pronounced it to be falſe. Having thus ſettled my principles, as I imagined, on the firmeſt foundation, I enjoyed the higheſt rapture in being the ſovereign judge of all things; and ſince the deity was to ſubmit to my cenſures, I admired my own *generoſity* in beſtowing one thought about him. In the midſt of this my admiration of lord *Shafteſbury*, I went to make a viſit for a few days to

a family

a family that were extremely fond of my company; and one evening as I was talking in raptures of the Characteriſtics, a gentleman then preſent, an old friend of my father's, (having expreſſed ſome aſtoniſhment that a perſon of my youth and vivacity ſhould have taken a turn ſo uncommon for a handſome girl not yet twenty years old) aſked me very ſeriouſly what ſyſtem I had deduced from my favourite author, and what principles I had really learnt from him. I had ran through the Characteriſtics with ſuch pleaſure, from the meeting with ſo many things ſuited rather to warm the imagination than to convince the judgment, that when thus called on to anſwer a plain queſtion I found myſelf ſtartled, and a good deal diſconcerted. However I muſtered up a great many of my author's favourite expreſſions, ſuch as SOCIAL AFFECTIONS, PHILANTHROPY, THE BEAUTY, the ORDER OF NATURE, and many more of the ſame kind; yet at laſt was almoſt reduced to the neceſſity of cloſing my ſentence with Mr. *Bays*'s phraſe of ALL

THAT.

THAT. But when I had a little recovered myſelf, I repeated to the gentleman almoſt all that I have been already repeating from the Characteriſtics. He heard me with great candor without the leaſt interruption, and, when I had concluded, looking at me with an eye of compaſſion, he ſaid, "that it "was great pity that ſuch a lively ima- "gination ſhould be ſo miſled." He found that my favourite author had exerted the influence he had over me in the general manner of favourites, and had led me the road which he intended. But he begged, as I was ſo fond of having all things ſubmitted to my own judgment, that I would a little more impartially examine the Characteriſtics.

It was very difficult for my friend to bring me to give him the leaſt attention; for I was ready to catch hold of every word he uttered, in order to laugh at it; and by the vivacity of my fancy to raiſe images on his expreſſions which they did not tend to; and then, believing that he could not ſtand ridicule, I was ready to pro-

pronounce that he had not therefore ſpoke a ſyllable of truth.

The gentleman proved himſelf my friend; for he bore my treatment of him with patience; till at laſt having gained my attention, he began in the following manner.

"Firſt conſider, *Cylinda*, what your au-
"thor ſays of ridicule's being the teſt
"of truth. If that teſt itſelf hath not ſome
"other teſt to be tried by, the chatterings
"or burleſque diſtortions of monkeys
"may have a power to overthrow all
"things that are ſerious. But if contra-
"dictions and falſe reaſonings are the true
"objects of ridicule, then muſt your author
"be condemned by his own criterion of
"truth; and inſtead of being any longer the
"object of your admiration, he may be-
"come a new ſubject for your laughter."

This aſſertion I own greatly ſtartled me; but without giving him any inter-

ruption,

ruption, I ſuffered the gentleman to proceed in the following manner.

" Examine what lord *Shafteſbury* ſays " of the good-nature of his deity. There " is ſome ingenuity I muſt confeſs in this " fancy of his about good-nature: for having ſome apprehenſions that God may " expect our obedience to his command, " it is a very cunning evaſion to diſcover, " firſt, that we are to ſit in judgment on " thoſe commands, and, if we determine " them not to be agreeable to our boaſted " reaſon, then that we are juſtified in a " total diſobedience to them. But ſhould " we by this proceeding, find ourſelves in " the wrong, we have no occaſion for any " farther ceremony than to tell our God " that he is a very good-natured deity, " and therefore he cannot poſſibly be angry with us; nor can he ſo contradict " the nature we have thought proper to " allot him, as to be out of humour. He " muſt undoubedly very kindly accept " ſuch a compliment, and approve our " judgments! This brings to my remem-

" brance the ſtory of a country-fellow,
" ſervant to a farmer, who, in a cauſe for
" his maſter, took a falſe oath; and, be-
" ing aſked by a neighbour how he could
" do ſo wicked a thing as to forſwear him-
" ſelf, thought it a ſufficient apology to
" anſwer, *That God Almighty was merciful,*
" *and would pardon him, but that his maſter*
" *he was ſure would never have forgiven him*
" *if he had told the truth.*

" Would any man, if his children were
" continually to run retrograde to his com-
" mands, and ſet up their own judgments
" in oppoſition to his, think it a ſufficient
" excuſe for them to ſay, that they did it
" upon the confidence they had of his
" good-nature? with what indignation
" would any maſter look upon his ſervants
" who ſhould boldly make ſuch an apo-
" logy!

" You confeſs, *Cylinda*, (continued my
" friend) that the whole drift of lord
" *Shafteſbury* is to exalt human reaſon, to
" prove that all nature is ſubject to our
" deter-

" determintion, and that no man hath a
" right to impoſe on us the belief of any
" thing but what our penetration hath diſ-
" covered, and our judgment approved :
" yet how doth he give up his own cauſe
" at laſt by comparing the human mind to
" [a] a paſſenger on board a ſhip ſitting
" down in the *hold*, and ignorant of all that
" paſſes above deck. We are confined
" (he ſays) in a dark caſe of fleſh. And in
" another place, ſpeaking of human com-
" prehenſion, theſe are his words: [b] *In*
" *an infinity of things mutually relative, a*
" *mind which ſees not infinitely, can ſee no-*
" *thing fully; and muſt therefore frequently*
" *ſee that as imperfect, which in itſelf is*
" *really perfect.*

" Is not this like what *Pope* ſays in his
" *Dunciad*,

— To prove a thing till all men doubt it,
And write about it goddeſs and about it?

[a] Vol. 2. page 290.
[b] Vol. 2 page 363.

" How many pages of the Characteriſtics
" are employed, in proving that our rea-
" ſon can inveſtigate all things, and by
" the beauties of nature lead us to the
" diſcovery of a deity ; yet when the au-
" thor is on the very point of converting
" his ſceptic, by proving that all ap-
" pearance of evil can be nothing but ap-
" pearance, how eaſily doth his cham-
" pion give up the cauſe, by ſaying that
" it would be hard to put him upon the
" proof of ſuch an hypotheſis, ſince no-
" thing leſs than an infinite mind can ſee
" infinite connexions !

" Can you, *Cylinda*, (adds he) be impo-
" ſed on by ſuch fallacious pretences to
" argument? Candidly examine all that hath
" paſſed in your own mind, ſince you firſt
" ſuffered your imagination to be warm-
" ed by the florid ſtyle and ſpecious rea-
" ſonings of the Characteriſtics ; and you
" will find that you have ſometimes been
" ſoothed by the power of pleaſing words,
" ſometimes terrified with bug-bear ex-
" preſſions, and upon the whole bubbled

" (as

" (as your author himſelf calls it) out of " your underſtanding."

As obſtinacy in error never poſſeſſed my mind, the moment it appeared to me that I had been deceived, I readily confeſſed the deception, and haſtily fled from its influence.

On this the *Cry* began to make wry faces, and to look on *Cylinda* with ſcorn.

Cylinda. I was ſo pleaſed with my friend's acknowledging that I myſelf, if I would examine them impartially, ſhould eaſily find out the fallacy of the Characteriſtics, that I ſoon ſet about the pleaſing taſk; and on reflexion plainly perceived the truth of the gentleman's obſervation, that bug-bear words, and bug-bear pictures, had made a child of me, and really *bubbled* me out of my underſtanding: ſo that whilſt the fear of being a dupe had made me aſſent to I knew not what, I fell into the very ſnare which I took ſo much pains to avoid, and was

the greateſt dupe of all. Beſides, I muſt confeſs that my lord *Shafteſbury*'s owning the narrow-ſightedneſs of us mortals, was what had the ſtrongeſt effect on my mind toward perſuading me to change my opinion of him; for I looked on myſelf as trick'd and deceived by him, ſince from his own words I had enjoyed the pleaſing thought, that I was ſovereign judge of all things; and yet he at laſt betrays his cauſe, by confeſſing the imbecility of the human intellect to ſee every thing fully.

The *Cry* had ſuffered various ſenſations during this account of *Cylinda*'s change of opinion. Her not being obſtinately tenacious of a favourite error, had almoſt made them declare open war againſt her; but when her motives to this change came to appear, and were found to be no other than her friend's compliments to her own ſagacity, and lord *Shafteſbury*'s having given up the cauſe of human wiſdom, they were tolerably appeaſed, and were not

not in much doubt but her future ſtory would prove her to be their deareſt friend.

Now *Portia* roſe up and made a motion with her hand, as if ſhe had an inclination to ſpeak; which the *Cry* no ſooner perceived, than the late calm, that her ſilence had granted to the boiling paſſions within their breaſts, immediately vaniſhed, and all within was diſorder and perturbation. The remembrance of ſome hints, which *Portia* had formerly thrown out concerning the opinion of ridicule's being the touchſtone of truth, awakened all their apprehenſions, leſt ſhe ſhould endeavour to clear up that point, and to refute that their favourite and beſt-beloved aſſertion. Actuated therefore by theſe fears, they declared that *Cylinda* ſhould not be interrupted; and raiſed ſuch a clamor as they very well knew *Portia* would not attempt to ſpeak in, or if ſhe did, her being heard would be an impoſſibility. But *Una*'s voice peremptorily inſiſting that *Portia* ſhould be heard, forced them to comply; although any

ſort of compliance or ſubmiſſions was ſo averſe to their natures, that nothing could more ſet the *turba* at work to torture their boſoms. And this all their beholders might eaſily diſcern by their powting looks and ſour countenances.

Portia. I would not willingly interrupt the narrative of a life, which appears to merit the cloſeſt attention. But I ſhould gladly add a few thoughts to the gentleman's opinion of lord *Shafteſbury*'s writings, and explain my own ſentiments more fully on the ſubject of ridicule.

Cylinda declared that ſuch an interruption would be extremely agreeable to her, and begged her therefore to proceed.

Portia. Of all the inventions in which mankind have delighted, this favourite one of making ridicule the teſt of truth, ſtands foremoſt in the rank for doing miſchief. Yet taken in the right ſenſe, it hath the appearance of undoubted truth.

The

The *Cry*, whoſe fears had been all alarmed, felt ſuch a ſudden change on hearing thoſe words, that according to an expreſſion in *Tom Thumb*, a country dance of joy was in their eyes; and for the firſt time they ſpared even *Portia* a little degree out of their ſmall ſtock of admiration.

Portia. But if ridicule be not rightly underſtood, ſo far is it from being the teſt of truth, that it is the grandeſt prop of fallacy that the human imagination could ever have formed.

Firſt the ridiculous ought viſibly to ariſe from the abſurdity of the ſubject ridiculed, and not from the whimſical fancy of the ridiculer. Otherwiſe what would become of all the moſt beautiful works of art, if they were to fall into the hands of buffoons? Should any perſon who had no taſte for real beauty, but delighted rather in prepoſterous deformity, clap on upon the head of the famous *Venus de Medicis* a fool's cap with a pair of aſs's ears, be-

daub the beautiful face with mud or wine lees, and throw a large robe of patch-work over its well-proportion'd limbs; how ſoon might that exquiſite model of ſymmetry and beauty become to the vulgar the higheſt object of ridicule?

And ſo it would, ſaid the *Cry*; and all burſt into a loud laugh at the ridiculous imaginary picture.

I don't deny it, reply'd *Portia*, if it had originally come out of the artiſt's hands in that figure: but when we remember its ſymmetry, its elegance, and the pleaſure which at firſt view it gave to our imaginations, can we be ſo impoſed on as not to perceive, that all the ridicule falls on the buffoon deſtroyer of beauty, and not on the admirable ſtatue itſelf? Viſible abſurdity may at firſt ſight (eſpecially where there is an immoderate love of laughter in the mind) give motion to the riſible muſcles, altho' in the before mentioned inſtance, I ſhould imagine it ſhould rather produce ſorrow to ſee ſo much beauty

beauty deſtroyed. But is there breathing a perſon ſo abſurd, as to avow that this diſfigured *Venus de Medicis* is in itſelf a deform'd, incongruous, and conſequently a ridiculous figure, becauſe the grinning multitude cannot behold it without a loud laugh? Nor can it be denyed, but that the moſt finiſh'd pieces of art are full as liable to become the objects of buffoonery, as the moſt rude and unpoliſhed; nay much more ſo, if we conſider but a moment on the true motive which muſt ſet theſe ridiculing wits at work, namely, the deſire of rendering themſelves of conſequence, by depreciating that excellence which they cannot reach: for finding within an incapacity for forming any thing beautiful themſelves, they endeavour to diſguiſe every thing that is worthy admiration. *Horace* ſeems to me of all other writers to have the moſt juſt notions of true ridicule. His clear images, his beautiful illuſtrations being perfectly calculated to place before our eyes what in its own nature is truly ridiculous. 'Tis the pretending to paint either with the pen

or

or the pencil any picture, without knowledge enough to render it uniform and natural. —— 'Tis when the produce of a labouring mountain is a poor diminutive mouſe that he juſtly calls for laughter, and not when falſe wit hath jumbled together a parcel of images, in order to raiſe the phantom of abſurdity where there is no ſuch thing, and where malice tries to raiſe laughter amongſt thoſe who delight in deriding both friend and foe. But when an author ſets out with a parade of pompous words, in order to draw a fair picture of his own ſpecies, and endeavours to exalt our opinion of ourſelves into a belief that we have a right to cenſure even the deity himſelf; when he hath inſinuated, that we are born to every perfection which the imagination can form; when he hath deſcribed this wonderful perfect creature, as prepared by ſolitude and contemplation, to ſit in judgment on the univerſe, and to diſcover from thence his own deity; when alſo we are big with the expectation of his judicious determination; —— how are we all baulked and diſappointed to find

find this ſtupendous being, this ſovereign judge of the univerſe, ſuddenly dwindled into a poor ſhort-ſighted creature confined in a dark caſe of fleſh! Is it poſſible on this occaſion to avoid thinking of *Horace*'s beautiful woman that ended in a fiſh's tail? or do we not perceive all the mountains in labour, and find the produce to be——a mouſe? 'Tis impoſſible to keep our imaginations from preſenting us with the bathos of writing, when we thus behold

[a] *This hold* Dalhouſy *the great god of war,*

ſo ſuddenly transformed into

Lieutenant colonel to the earl of Marr.

To follow therefore the example of juſtice, left us in the ſtory of *Phalaris*, let us try this polite author by his own teſt; and if inconſiſtency and contradictions call for our

[a] The art of ſinking in poetry.

our laughter, his much-admired writings will in ſome meaſure become the ſubject for ridicule.

The *Cry*, who were always ready for a jeſt, gave their aſſent in this caſe, even to *Portia* their greateſt enemy; for if ſomebody was to be laugh'd at, they cared not much who it was, provided they themſelves, in that collective body, were exempt from being the objects of another's deriſion.

Cylinda liſten'd to *Portia* with a ſilent attention, and look'd ardently deſirous that ſhe would purſue the ſubject ſhe had ſo well begun.

Portia. But notwithſtanding I can ſee the contradictions and the ridiculous of ſome part of the Characteriſtics, yet I would by no means deny the author of them his due praiſe. His ſtrong and elegant ſtrokes in many parts of his works, claim our admiration of him as a writer. Nay he ſtands forth as one of the principal

inſtances

inſtances that I can recollect, of a truth which I think inconteſtable, namely, that candor exalts and enlarges the capacity, whilſt the want of candor ſtifles and ſuppreſſes all its force. For in thoſe parts of his writings, where he is willing truth ſhould really appear, he both proves his taſte and ſhews his underſtanding; but when by the force of fallacy he endeavours uncandidly to hide away and conceal the truth, his reaſonings are confuſed, and he only heaps one abſurdity upon another.

How juſtly founded lord *Shaftesbury*'s aſſertion is, that ridicule could not hurt the doctrines of *Socrates*, or the reputation of that philoſopher, I will not at preſent take upon me to determine; but that ridicule was the only implement of miſchief in the hands of his malicious adverſaries which could have wrought his deſtruction, appears to me exceſſively plain; for, if I am not miſtaken, thus ſtood the caſe with that great man at *Athens*.

Anytus,

Anytus, on ſome private pique, ſought to take away the life of *Socrates*; but, on a conſultation with his friend *Melitus*, they agreed that the character of *Socrates* was too much honoured and revered, for them to hope ſucceſs from any ſlanderous accuſation againſt him. On this they applied to the witty *Ariſtophanes*, who (it is moſt likely at their requeſt) wrote the comedy of the *Clouds*, in which he deſcends to every baſe and mean artifice adapted to catch the ears of the vulgar, that, by falſe ridicule, he might depreciate the man whoſe wiſdom ſoar'd far above his reach. *Socrates* was ſaid in his perſon to reſemble *Silenus*, the foſter-father of *Bacchus*, who was deified for his debauches. *Ariſtophanes* therefore clapp'd a fellow into a baſket, hung him up in the middle of the ſtage, gave him the name of *Socrates*, (dreſs'd no doubt as like him as poſſible) and made him ſpeak ſome noted words of *Silenus*, which words by *Socrates* had in truth never been made uſe of. I appeal to the common experience of mankind, whether ſuch a public falſe repreſentation would not at

any

any time raiſe peals of laughter from a vulgar audience, who, wanting judgment to diſtinguiſh (altho' the likeneſs was not a whit more than between an elephant and an ant) would pronounce the man ſo repreſented ridiculous? But at the end of the play, when it might be ſuppoſed that the *Athenian* mob had ſufficiently vented their laughter, malice breaks out in its own true colours. *Socrates* was loaded with falſe accuſations, as being the head of a ſect who denied the being of the gods; and now that it was found that *Socrates*, by their buffoon tricks, was become a laughing-ſtock, the weapons of ridicule were to be changed into firebrands, which were recommended to the mob whilſt their hearts were thus inflamed; and the laſt ſpeech of the play, without diſguiſe, tells them where to direct their fury. The minds of the grinning multitude being caught by buffoonery, were fitted to receive any ill impreſſion againſt *Socrates*. Firſt, by the power of burleſque they laugh'd at him; then, glad to juſtify their own buffoonery, they readily lent an ear to

any

any evil accuſation that his enemies could propoſe. Thoſe accuſations, which were firſt ſwallowed in the form of jeſting on the theatre, now became ſerious in the forum; and thus, by the force of *ridicule*, of *funn*, of *burleſque*, (meant undoubtedly only to make folks merry) was laid the true foundation for the fall of the wiſeſt and beſt man that ever yet appear'd in the heathen world.

Languiſhing for ridicule, and an immoderate love of jeſting, is the bane of ſociety. Such univerſal ſcoffers and gigglers may properly be termed mental poſture-maſters, who diſtort and weaken their faculties, inſtead of exerting them with ſtrength and activity to any eligible purpoſe. But let thoſe perſons, who are never in earneſt, and who endeavour to prove that every thing in nature is a jeſt, take great heed that they claim to themſelves no one virtue or good quality, leſt the jeſt of the claim ſhould too viſibly appear to the dulleſt apprehenſion. This prepoſterous love of joking, upon all occaſions, is

fooliſhly

fooliſhly indulged in children, grows head-ſtrong and offenſive in manhood, and when the faculties begin to decay, renders old age ridiculous. As much as I abhor all harſh ſeverity to children, and the keeping them continually in dread of the rod, in order to make them learn what may never be of the leaſt uſe to them, yet would I by ſeverity (if gentle methods would not prevail) root early from their minds this malicious love of turning every thing into ridicule. And greatly do I approve what a lady of my acquaintance did on this occaſion. She had been the beſt of wives, whilſt ſhe was ſo happy as to have the moſt indulgent of huſbands yet alive; but being left a widow with two little girls, ſhe confined all her thoughts to the care of her children. She was the moſt affectionate of mothers. She ſpared no pains for their inſtruction, nor ever corrected them, except when the ſole conſideration for their own good made it abſolutely neceſſary. But obſerving one day that her youngeſt girl had thrown down her ſiſter's card-built houſe, only for funn and diverſion,

and becauſe her ſiſter was vexed at it, the young one inſulted her, or, in other words, turned her into ridicule (ſo early doth the love of this ſport begin) for being grieved at a jeſt, ſhe, in my opinion, very judiciouſly whipp'd her for the joke.

The *Cry* wrung their hands, and bemoan'd the child in all the terms of compaſſion they could invent; declaring, that they never heard of any thing half ſo barbarous, as the mother to whip a poor dear little innocent only for a jeſt.

Portia. But the very next day, on the ſame child's running haſtily, and daſhing to pieces a fine ſet of china, a preſent from a beloved huſband, her mother let this accident paſs, without any other reproof, than ſaying, "You muſt take care, my "dear child, and not run ſo haſtily ano-"ther time."

Now all the compaſſion which late had ſeized the minds of the *Cry* for the poor dear little innocent vaniſhed at

at once; and each ſeparately fixing her thoughts on ſome favourite piece of china, ſome ſhell, or ſome other brittle ware of her own private property, ſcreamed out; "An odious little careleſs brat, "had ſhe been mine I would certainly "have flead her alive."

Portia took no notice of their behaviour, but having finiſhed what ſhe intended to ſay, ſat down in her ſeat, whilſt the *Cry* continued for ſome time to be the picture of a play-houſe audience, after the performance of a new play, each being eager to vent ſome criticiſm on what they had heard: but *Una* at laſt commanded ſilence among the *Cry*, and permitted *Cylinda* to proceed with her uncommon ſtory.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Et mihi dulce magis reſoluto vivere collo.

PORTIA. UNA. The CRY.

CYLINDA.

I HAVE already, and with great truth declared, that I had not obſtinacy enough in my diſpoſition to retain an error, and to ſtick by an abſurdity that was glaring. I have a ſort of mental greedineſs, which makes me eager to take in any food that appears wholeſome or palatable; but as ſoon as it becomes any ways diſtaſteful, I inſtantly reject it. Yet was my imagination too active,

tive, too full of vivacity, to bear idleneſs, and my mind was ſo much delighted with its ſelf-admiration, that it could by no means quit the ſearch after ſome new method of enhancing that my greateſt pleaſure. As my diſcarding my lord *Shafteſbury* and all his opinions was not from conſidering him in the view which I have now ſeen him ſo juſtly painted, but for his betraying the cauſe of human wiſdom (for his endeavour to exalt man's reaſoning faculties was by no means to me his offence) quitting ſo weak a guide, I ſent my roving fancy unbridled to explore the ways of heaven and earth, in order to diſcover ſome new object of admiration, or rather ſome new foundation on which I might build ſome yet unthought-of ſuperſtructure to my own ſelf-applauſe. From the general idea I had before conceived of virtue, I now began to form a muſter roll of them all, as ſeparately defined by philoſophers; and I fell in love with each particular virtue in its turn, juſt as it happened to ſuit with my then preſent inclination,

tion. I was amongſt the virtues like the great *Turk* in his ſeraglio of women; and I choſe to dwell with that virtue which looked the faireſt in my eyes, and gave me at that ſeaſon moſt pleaſure. In ſhort, I made wives of them; I firſt admired them, then made them my own property, and if they would not ſubmit to my will, I again turned them off and divorced them.

Portia could not refrain from ſmiling as before at *Cylinda*'s whimſical manner of relating the ſenſations of her mind. *Una* looked at her with an attentive concern: almoſt fearing that her wild imagination would carry her to perdition. Whilſt the *Cry* were too much puzzled what to make of her ſentiments, to ſuffer them often to give her any ſort of interruption in her diſcourſe.

Cylinda. The four cardinal virtues, prudence, temperance, fortitude and juſtice, I made all my own, and forced them to ſubmit

ſubmit to my command. Inſtead of the common ambition of outward honours and high ſtation, I was my own world, and the kingdoms I coveted were ſuch as I could raiſe in my own mind. The four cardinal virtues were the chief pillars of my ſtate; and the other attendant virtues, with all their properties aſcribed to them by philoſophers, came in their train to ſupport my dignity.

When any inclination aroſe in my mind (the force of which was but ſmall) I ſcrutinized the gratification of it on every ſide, and rejoiced on the diſcovery of its being in the leaſt imprudent; for then I could, by reſiſting this inclination, indulge myſelf with the thought that the [a] rational part of my ſoul was in its full vigor, and that prudence was all my own. But if the inclination roſe with any impetuous ſway, I was ſure either to prove

[a] Prudentia rationabilis animi partis virtus eſt. *Collins ex Ariſtotele.*

(fully to my own ſatisfaction) that the gratification of it was not imprudent, or that prudence was another word for mean-ſpiritedneſs; and that my ſoul was too enlarged to be tyed down by rules, fit only to reſtrain cowards. I choſe nobly to dare, and was far above the fear of any conſequences. Then up roſe MAGNANIMITY, backed with all the arguments my inclination could ſuggeſt; and by the force of my imagination it was always ſure to get the better, and poor prudence either ſhamefully retreated, or was beaten off in the fray. For, as an ingenious author once made a battle of the books, ſo I made a battle of the virtues; and the field of action was my own mind. Yet theſe tumults gave me very little trouble or vexation, for I never fail'd taking that part to which my inclination moſt ſtrongly led me, and that ſide was always ſure to come off victorious. I never was out of humour with or diſcarded juſtice; for the part I made her play was to determine me always in the right, and to allow me poſſeſſed of every good quality; this I made

made juſtice pronounce as my due, and liberality beſtow on me with a plenteous hand. Then as to FORTITUDE, nothing could be more truly at my command: for I could at any time ſit and raiſe in my mind the idea of every evil to which human life is incident, and could bear them (being abſent) with ſuch perfect eaſe and tranquillity, that I doubted not but I was poſſeſſed of the higheſt degree of fortitude. Yet as I was not extremely fond of the contemplation even of ideal ills, I ſoon grew tired of this virtue; and giving a looſe to my imagination, I again raiſed myſelf up to the higheſt pitch of magnanimity. I had read amongſt the philoſophers, "that it is the property of magnanimity bravely and with an equal mind "to bear proſperity, adverſity, renown, "or ignominy; that it delights not in plea-"ſure, in power or in victory; but in "its own greatneſs and profundity of "ſoul: that the man of magnanimity "loves not life, nor deſires to live on "baſe conditions; but fixes his delight on "what is generous and noble." It was

this then of all the virtues that had moſt chance for my higheſt favour. Fortitude, which was only to ſupport me againſt the anguiſh of any preſent calamity, or the fear of any future, fell ſhort in the compariſon; and my whole delight was fixed in the admiration of *my own greatneſs and profundity of ſoul.* Whatever path my roving imagintion led me, whether cordially to embrace the virtues, becauſe I thought myſelf poſſeſſed of them, or to deſpiſe them when that fancy fail'd me; whether prudence, fortitude, or any other demigod was for the preſent ſet up, yet the main point was ſtill the ſame; all were to bow down before my own greatneſs and profundity. My books alſo I choſe according to my reigning whim, with which I made every thing to coincide. The heros of my fancy too had the ſame fate, and I ſhortened even the ſhort date of mortal heroiſm; for mine were only the heros of a day, nay ſometimes of an hour, juſt tallying with the preſent ſubject of my admiration. Whilſt I was enraptured with magnanimity, one part of which is ſaid to

be

be "the diſdaining to live on baſe condi-
"tions," *Cato* of *Utica* was my hero. Every outward accident alſo that happend to me, generally took its riſe from the preſent favourite imagination of my brain; and it was I think in the third day of the reign of *magnanimity*, in the ſixth hour of the heroiſm of *Cato*, that I was prevailed on by ſome young ladies of my acquaintance to go with them to the neighbouring city to ſee *Addiſon*'s tragedy of *Cato* acted by a ſet of ſtrollers, amongſt whom was a young gentleman, the younger ſon of a baronet. This youth, from having been highly applauded in the part of *Cato*, which he acted amongſt his companions in the ſchool where he was put for education, became ſo fond of ſuch popular applauſe, as to quit the road of life he was deſigned for by his parents, and to join himſelf to this ſtrolling company; where he ſtill held the pre-eminence, and was inveſted with all the dignity of their principal parts. This was the young gentleman, who now alſo perſonated *Cato*. He was ex-

tremely handſome, thoroughly topp'd his part, and met with univerſal approbation. I beheld with pleaſure all the ſentiments of my favourite hero of antiquity, in a manner brought into life by the force of fine action, and animated by the vigor of youth. The graceful attitude of the actor, with the ſenſibility of his countenance, when looking on his dead ſon, he with a ſteady greatneſs of mind uttered theſe words, "Thanks to the gods, my boy has done "his duty," dwelt ſtrongly on my imagination; and I was ſo charmed with ſeeing my old *Cato* in a manner boil'd in *Medea*'s kettle, and metamorphoſed into the bloom of youth and beauty, that I was ſomewhat a little like being in love with him. My father had formerly ſome acquaintance with the parents of this young gentleman, and now paid their ſon the civility of giving him a general invitation to our houſe, which was not a little pleaſing to me, and which he alſo very readily accepted. From the moment I in the leaſt liked this young fellow, I ſuffered him

in

in my opinion to participate with me in the poſſeſſion of the virtues; and generouſly beſtowed on him ſome ſhare of all my favourites; even magnanimity itſelf: for as I looked upon myſelf as perfect miſtreſs of all the virtues, I imparted them to others juſt in what degree I thought proper, and meaſured their deſert juſt as they were or were not agreeable to my fancy. As I wore no diſguiſe, it was not long before my young hero perceived my great liking to him; but his imagination far outran my intentions. For as ſoon as he ſeriouſly endeavoured to prevail with me to marry him, he awakened all my apprehenſions and alarmed my fears. Not from thoſe common conſiderations, ſuch as the care of a future family, or the ſtation of life he had thrown himſelf into, (for as *Socrates* ſays, that a wiſe man is a citizen of the world, ſo I thought that a wiſe woman was equally at liberty to range through every ſtation or degree of men, to fix her choice wherever ſhe pleaſed:) but my fears were of a deeper kind,

and ſtruck at matrimony itſelf. The loſs of liberty which muſt attend being a wife, was of all things the moſt horrible to my imagination; and the abſurdity of my loſing my liberty from my admiration of *Cato*, was too glaring to eſcape my obſervation. Yet as I had little accuſtomed myſelf to contradict even the moſt whimſical of my inclinations, I had ſome ſhort ſtruggle in my mind, whether I ſhould reſign my lover or my liberty; but this laſted not long. I found myſelf as free as air, and could not bear the thought of putting myſelf in any man's power for life, only from a preſent capricious inclination. I therefore gave my young gentleman an abſolute refuſal; and it was not long before he left the country with the reſt of his companions. I was not of a humour to pine for the abſent; I rejoiced I had eſcaped matrimony, and could even rally myſelf for having ſuffered an inclination for the young *Cato* to creep in on the back of my admiration of the old one. I immediately dethroned

throned MAGNANIMITY, and placed PRUDENCE in its ſtead; for I hugged myſelf in the thought, that no inclination was able to put me off my guard, or to get the better of my forecaſt and prudence.

SCENE IV.

Metrodorus diſoit qu'en la triſteſſe, il y a quelque alliage de plaiſir : je ne ſçay s'il vouloit dire autre choſe, mais moy, j'imagine bien, qu'il y a du deſſein, du conſentement, et de la complaiſance, a ſe nourrir de la melancholie.

MONTAIGNE.

PORTIA. CYLINDA. UNA. The CRY.

CYLINDA.

BUT now an affliction befel me, to which my own whims did not in the leaſt contribute ; and which at that time ſo entirely engaged all my attention, that the cares of the imaginary kingdom I had erected in my own mind were forced for a ſeaſon to yield to another object of my thoughts.

My

My father had been long in a weak ſtate of health, but now each day brought on him viſible marks of his approaching diſſolution; and in three months he was releaſed from all his pains.

Whilſt any life remained in him, my whole care, my every thought was bent on attending my father with the utmoſt aſſiduity; my invention was continually on the ſearch for methods to ſoften his pains and alleviate his ſufferings. No pleaſures could have bribed me to have been guilty of the leaſt neglect, in the performance of a duty in which my heart was ſo entirely involved. For indeed my higheſt pleaſure was centered in my attendance on a parent, for whom I truly felt the moſt filial affection.

The ſpeaking eyes of *Portia* at this moment ſparkled with lively joy on *Cylinda*, and *Una* herſelf began to cheriſh ſome pleaſing hopes of her; the *Cry* alſo at this time choſe to beſtow their praiſes on the ſame object which *Una* had honoured

with

with her approbation; for 'tis one of their properties to exalt to the ſkies, and to eſteem as the higheſt virtue, ſome ſorts of common duties. Filial affection happened to be amongſt their catalogue, and as if ſuch a tender behaviour was extremely ſcarce, and extraordinary in children towards their parents, they firſt gaped at the wonder, and then fell into their common method of praiſe, by throwing forth all the language properly adapted to fulſome adulation.

Cylinda. When my father was no more, I gave an unbridled looſe to my affliction, and ſet no bounds to my immoderate ſorrow; to mourn, to bewail, and to lament myſelf became the ſtrongeſt bent of my ſoul. I was hurried through all the wild deluſions to which uncurbed paſſions can lead; raging grief and wild deſpair were then in ſuch full poſſeſſion of my heart, that to indulge them was my greateſt pleaſure.

Now

——eſt quædam flere voluptas. OVID.

Now *Portia*'s countenance indicated a compaſſionate ſorrow, *Una* ſighed, and the high praiſes the *Cry* had ſounded forth of *Cylinda* were ſuddenly transformed into full as high cenſures. For; that there is a pleaſure in the indulgence of grief when it is the principal bent of the mind, is a ſecret they wiſh to be concealed deep in the center of the earth; and they abhor the perſon who brings ſuch a truth into open light, with as much inveteracy as a felon feels towards his accomplice who betrays him to the magiſtrate, and gives him up as a guilty ſacrifice to the laws of his country.

Cylinda. I roved in fancy through every paſt ſcene of my life, in which either my father's converſation or his indulgence had given me pleaſure, by which means I contrived to preſerve continually in my thoughts the immenſe greatneſs of my loſs; by ſuch political management I at laſt raiſed ſuch tumultuous ſtorms in my breaſt, as by experience I found was much eaſier to

raiſe

raiſe than to allay; for ſorrow thus indulged bore me down with a reſiſtleſs torrent, and I was too weak to ſtop its courſe: my late admired virtues were now no longer the objects of my conſideration, *prudence* was forgot, *fortitude*, (the ill being preſent and the trumpet ſounding to battle,) like a coward fled the field, and *magnanimity* ſuddenly dwindled from its giant greatneſs into the diminutive appearance of a dwarfiſh pigmy. All the beauties of nature, which at times I had admired with an enthuſiaſtic warmth, were vaniſhed, or transformed into wild diſorder and univerſal confuſion. My ſoul being darkened, tumultuous and unruly, every outward object ſeemed to ſympathize with the deformity harboured within my own boſom. All my favourite authors either ancient or modern, that were accuſtomed to fill my mind with pleaſure, from whom alſo I had often extracted ſuch ſatisfactory conſolation for the loſs of my friends, whilſt that loſs was at a diſtance and uncertain, ceaſed, now that loſs was preſent, to yield me the leaſt glim-

mering

mering ray of comfort. My thoughts dwelt too intenſely on my own ſorrow to leave room for the entrance of any other idea, and the moſt eloquent philoſophy might as well have been beſtowed on an inanimate ſtatue. My imagination ſcaled heaven itſelf, and dethroned the very gods; for whilſt I was, as I fancied, thus cruelly and unjuſtly afflicted, I would by no means ſuffer myſelf to believe that any deity governed the world.

The fatigues of nightly watchings, and the daily anxiety I laboured under during my father's illneſs, joined to the unlimited grief that I ſuffered in my mind after his death, ſo ſhook my conſtitution, that I once thought both my life and affliction would ſoon come to a final period.

The *Cry* now burſt into a loud fit of contemptuous laughter, imagining that they had the happineſs to perceive a manifeſt abſurdity in *Cylinda*'s ſaying, that there was a pleaſure in grieving, whilſt ſhe con-

feſſed it had like to have produced ſo fatal an effect; but as this abſurdity was too ſmall to be viſible to any eyes but thoſe of the *Cry*, *Cylinda* proceeded, and left them to the full enjoyment of their fancy'd diſcovery.

Cylinda. As ſoon as ſorrow began to flow from my eyes, my heart felt lighter, and the violence with which I vented my affliction did that for me which I not did endeavour to do for myſelf: for I found that the ſluces of grief are not inexhauſtible, and that by venting it without reſtraint it naturally ſubſided, and wanted not my aſſiſtance. After every violent vent of ſorrow, ſomething like a little calm enſued, during which intervals it was my cuſtom to raiſe up to myſelf ſome ſmall comfort, by imagining that it was the peculiar delicacy, the great ſenſibility of my ſoul, that cauſed ſuch an unuſual degree of ſorrow for the loſs of a father: and as I imputed it to gratitude, and made filial affection its baſis, all the tender and ſofter ties of kindred and affection were, my in

opinion,

opinion, the moſt amiable of all the human virtues.

But when the height of my ſorrow by its violence had ſpent itſelf, it left me ſo extremely weak, that my faculties had no power to exert themſelves: my imagination was in a manner ſubdued; and there was a ſort of vacuum, or, to ſpeak more properly, an interregnum in my mind, and both my bodily and mental appetite were ſo weak that I loathed all kind of food, and was but barely in a ſtate of exiſtence: but when my grief was ſubſided, I did not endeavour to keep up any appearance of ſorrow in order to impoſe on others; a practice I abhor'd, and always avoided; for the opinion of others was never conſidered by me with any great anxiety. The true motto I deſerved was, that

My mind to me a kingdom is;

and ſo abſolute a kingdom that I could crown, depoſe, pull down one monarch and ſet up another at the word of command, without

without being beholden to the aſſiſtance of ordinary human means; ſuch as fleets, armies, ſtratagems, policies, with a long train of *et ceteras*, neceſſary to make any revolution in earthly kingdoms and the fluctuating empires of this world.

The *Cry*, from the time they had made that tranſition ſo agreeable to their natures, from extolling *Cylinda* for her filial affection, to abuſing her for betraying one of their ſecrets, had remained in profound ſilence, ſtill deeply contemplating whether *Cylinda* was to be deemed a friend; or to be marked as an enemy: her raging in grief, her beholding all nature in confuſion becauſe ſhe was afflicted, her dethroning the gods on the fancy that ſhe met with injuſtice, with many other things ſhe had related, had met with their higheſt approbation: but then her betraying their ſecrets, her abhorrence of the affectation of ſorrow for the purpoſe of deceit, ſtaggered their purpoſes, and prevented their coming to any fixed reſolution. They weighed all ſides nicely

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in the balance, and were in the perplexed ſituation of the man in the farce, who declares "much may be ſaid on both ſides "the queſtion." But *Cylinda*'s laſt picture of having a kingdom at her command, in which ſhe could perform the part of a deity, and crown or depoſe whomever ſhe pleaſed, raiſed ſo great a delight in the minds of the *Cry*, that they for the moment forgot even her betraying one of their favourite ſecrets; were ready to embrace her; all roſe with emulation to clap their hands, and ſtrove to make manifeſt every mark of approbation, till the whole place re-echoed their clamorous applauſe.

SCENE

SCENE V.

—Rex denique regum,
—niſi cum pituita moleſta eſt. HOR.

PORTIA. CYLINDA. UNA. The CRY.

CYLINDA.

MY ſtrength returning, and my paſſion of grief being ſubſided, a new employment was now to be ſought for my reſtleſs imagination. The VIRTUES like falſe friends had fail'd me in the day of neceſſity, and were therefore to be no longer truſted. Beſides, the imagination can never be raiſed twice into an enthuſiaſtic warmth for the ſame mental object, any more than the outward eye can

can view with the ſame deſire as at firſt ſight that beauty to which it is grown indifferent. The ſearch of a new adventure is as pleaſant to a mental knight errant as it ever could have been to the officious gallantry of *Don Quixot* himſelf: and none oftener than ſuch intellectual adventurers miſtake large flocks of ſheep for advancing armies, or windmills for giants. I now endeavoured to make myſelf more perfect in *greek*, and eagerly began reading *Plato*. From hence I ſoon became ſo enraptured with the intellectual part of my own compoſition, that all outward things were contemptible in the compariſon. I immediately placed all pleaſure in the contemplation of the divine nature, and of the intellectual part of the human nature, which, as far as it is immortal, muſt (according to *Plato*) partake of the divine. I could for hours together delight myſelf with the thought, that it was poſſible for me to partake of divinity. Whilſt I had two purſuits in reading *Plato*, namely, the learning his philoſophy, and getting more knowledge of the *greek* language,

guage, I was very well pleaſed with my employment: but yet there were ſome things in the platonic doctrine that were not thoroughly to my ſatisfaction; and I ſoon began to languiſh for ſome new adventure. From platoniſm to abſolute ſtoiciſm was an eaſy tranſition. In many things indeed they perfectly agreed; but where they differed, the latter was much more agreeable to my humour. I have repeatedly ſaid, that from the time I was old enough to reflect, I had diſcovered that the government of my paſſions, ſo as not to keep my mind in an uproar, was neceſſary towards attaining any tolerable degree of eaſe: but this political ſcheme of avoiding uneaſineſs or purſuing pleaſure, altho' I had endeavoured to follow it, had no dignity, no grandeur in it; nor was it in the leaſt a ſubject for ſelf-admiration: for I conſidered that the child who keeps its fingers out of the fire for fear of being burnt, and the dog that obeys his maſter to avoid the ſtroke of the whip, uſe the ſame policy of avoiding evil with myſelf. I wanted ſome higher,

ſome

ſome mental gratification of my own dignity: and here the ſtoical ſcheme broke in upon me with all the eclat of philoſophy. Yet even this doctrine of the ſtoics, whilſt it kept within any bounds of ſenſe and reaſon, did not ſatisfy me; for as I never did things by halves, I ran into the moſt extravagant and enthuſiaſtic parts of it. Becauſe the government of my paſſions was neceſſary, I would have no paſſions at all; and as mental pleaſures were ſuppoſed to be the higheſt, I would not allow my body to have any ſenſations.

The platonic doctrine admitted, that ſome things are better and ſome worſe, as that riches are better than poverty, eaſe than pain, *&c.* A virtuous man therefore ſurrounded with worldly bleſſings, they deemed more happy than a virtuous man loaded with misfortunes. This would not do for me, this was allowing a dependence upon ſenſe, and ſome things without me, whereas I would be entirely independent, and my mind ſhould ſit enthroned

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in its own world. The ſtoics held that there was no MEAN in any thing, no degrees of good or ill. Some things indeed, they ſay, are good, ſome ill, and ſome indifferent: for virtue they aſſert to be A GOOD, vice AN EVIL, and all other things, as riches, poverty, eaſe, pain, &c. are according to their doctrine meerly INDIFFERENT. They affirmed therefore that a virtuous man upon a rack was as happy as a virtuous man off a rack; and how was I charmed with the greatneſs of mind which *Poſſidonius* poſſeſſed, who in reading lectures with *Pompey* the great, whilſt he lay racked with rheumatic pains, could in their moſt violent attack cry out, "I acknowledge, oh pain! that thou art "troubleſome, but no real evil!"

I had now no outward object to grieve me; I had fortune ſufficient for all my deſires; for I had no ambition or avarice; I had no perſon living to contradict me, and might, if a political regard to myſelf had not reſtrained me within the bounds of temperance, have revelled in all the delights of luxury

luxury: but I ſcorned to own even to myſelf, that I could receive any pleaſure from things which my philoſophy had pronounced to be purely indifferent; and oftentimes as I have been ſitting in an arbor at the bottom of my garden, from whence (as it was formed on the declivity of a hill) I had a proſpect moſt agreeably variegated with woods, lawns, and the winding of a large river, whilſt I was breathing the ſweets of a calm ſummer's evening air, hearing the melody of various birds, reclined on a bed of the ſofteſt chamemiel, and covered with a canopy of roſes, jaſmine, and honeyſuckle, I uſed to cry out, "Oh pain! I will never acknow-"ledge thee to be a real evil." Nor did I exult a little, that I had gone one ſtep farther than my philoſopher: for; as pain was abſent, I would not, as *Poſſidonius* did, even allow it to be troubleſome.

As to the common people in my neighbourhood, who were afflicted with ſickneſs or any other misfortune, I did my utmoſt to relieve their diſtreſs, and to al-

leviate their ſufferings: for I conſidered that they, poor creatures, had not learning enough to find out that pain was no evil; and therefore it could not be wondered at, that they ſhould feel its utmoſt force. But with what contempt did I look down on thoſe of a higher education, who complained of ill health, loſſes or diſappointments of any kind! How mean-ſpirited, and how much below the dignity of their natures, did I eſteem ſuch complaints! I could have told them that they had nothing to do but to turn ſtoics, which, by a kind of magic charm, would extract all the evil from human miſeries, and ſhew them that it was quite an indifferent thing whether they were in pain or at eaſe. Thus did I indulge myſelf in all the reſveries and higheſt enthuſiaſm of the ſtoical doctrines; for on a very ſmall foundation I could build what ſuperſtructure beſt pleaſed my fancy, and give to every thought the turn which my inclination judged proper for its purpoſe. But I was ſuddenly cured of this ſtoical

phrenſey

phrenſey by a violent fever, which left me ſo very weak, that my imagination had no force to raiſe any mental pleaſures; my mind conſequently was come to another interregnum, and thus ended the monarchy of ſtoiciſm.

End of the Second Volume.

ERRATA.

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